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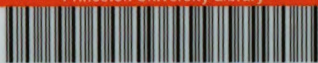
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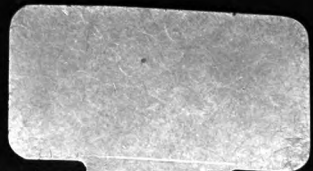
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CONTRIBUTIONS
TO
RELIGIOUS THOUGHT



SOME CONTRIBUTIONS
TO THE
RELIGIOUS THOUGHT
OF OUR TIME

BEING
SERMONS AND ADDRESSES
DELIVERED IN LONDON, OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE
BRISTOL, AND ELSEWHERE

BY THE
REV. JAMES M. WILSON, M.A.

HEADMASTER OF CLIFTON COLLEGE
AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

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PREFACE

SEVERAL of the Sermons and Addresses in this volume have been helpful to people who, in these days of transference of the grounds of belief, find a difficulty in expressing their deep religious faiths and convictions in terms compatible with intellectual honesty. It was with a view to this class of listeners that most of these Sermons were originally preached; and it is for them that I now send this volume to the press, in the hope that it may have some temporary utility.

JAMES M. WILSON.

CLIFTON COLLEGE,
September 1888.

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I

SOCIAL SCIENCE¹

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”—TITUS iii. 8.

THERE is, we may be sure, but one ruling thought in our minds at this moment, the relation of Social Science to Religion. This congregation is a witness that such a relation is believed to exist.

By the first of these two factors we mean to include all that may be learned by history and observation as to the nature and conditions of social and national well-being, the result of methodical inquiry into economical and sociological phenomena ; and finally, the enactment of laws, those restraints which an intelligent community, having attained freedom, proceeds to impose and enforce on itself for its own good.

The second is a phenomenon and factor in life hitherto universal—the power of religion. It has always been a great power in social life, and its standard, though perhaps not its influence, has always been rising and never falling. It is based on human

¹ Preached in St. Mary's, Nottingham, 20th September 1882.

nature itself, man's necessary relation to the infinite, to the supernatural, to God. Now it is not necessary that there should be any relation or co-operation between these two great powers. Social Science might be toiled for from scientific or utilitarian motives with as little religious feeling as chemistry. Religion might be a purely speculative or a purely personal matter: either an abstract philosophy, or the sense of individual sin, forgiveness, salvation.

An illustration of this separation, full of instruction for us, may be found in the second and third centuries of our era in Rome. In that age may be seen the work of a Social Science Association as great, as wise, as unselfish, as powerfully patronised, as any association in our day. It was the age of the great Stoic politicians, to whom are due the genius and humanity of Roman law. Simultaneously, but existing wholly apart, may be seen the religious individualism of the Christianity of that age—which disregarded politics and economics; whose maxim was to obey the *de facto* government; which preached resignation, not amelioration; which occupied itself more with the next world than with this.

These two factors existed then, and may still exist, without relation to one another. But this separation tends to paralyse both. For each supplies something that the other lacks. Assuredly they must be united before the kingdom of God can come.

The pursuit of science is with some few men a species of worship; the passion for truth, the presence of the infinite, the reverence it brings, are almost a religion. And it might be assumed that Social Science and legislation, with its keen human and

moral interests, would be the most religious of sciences. Nevertheless it is not necessarily so. It involves the danger of treating men as instruments, as means ; not as moral beings, as ends. It may harden, not deepen. And what power does it possess to create motive ? To know the best course is one thing : but how is the will of the Social Reformer to be braced to the necessary toil ? The root of volition is not knowledge but feeling. How are we to get to feel as we know ? Social Science needs then a motive outside itself. Isolated it dies, as Stoicism died, not wholly ineffectual, but disappointed, despairing.

It is more important to remark that religion suffers no less where it is divorced from life. And it suffers from this cause among us now and throughout Christendom. It is too much an affair of Church and opinions and mysteries, and of conventional believing for believing's sake ; too little the sympathetic beneficence of an active life in the world. Busy men, and the best men and women are busy, find that what is by others called religion is crowded out, and that their high social aims are viewed with suspicion. Many a noble heart drifts into what is called irreligion, drifts into a contempt for religion, because the religion presented to it is so unworthy, so unaggressive, so subjective. Now the truth that I am here to proclaim is that these two powers must work in closest alliance. Religion will contribute the motive, the love ; the infectious, undying zeal that springs from Christ. Science will contribute the method, the sphere. This is, I am sure, the line of progress along which we are moving and may move faster, and on which we may find a cure for some

of the evils we deplore. This is something worth living for. This is why we meet here to-day.

This combination offers a key to some yet unsolved problems in the life of individuals. Here perhaps is to be found the object of our boasted individual freedom. Freedom for each man to think, and speak, and act as he will, is ever growing. But to what purpose? Freedom is a means, not an end. This is, I suppose, Mazzini's meaning in his great saying that it is no longer rights but duties that the Social Reformers must preach. Social Science has become religious. Here too is the cure for aimlessness, for melancholy, perhaps even for cynical worldliness. Here is an aid to purity and simplicity. In such a combination may also be found the solution of some speculative problems that tease us. A man learns himself by action, not by self-observation. "Do thy duty," as Goethe said, "and thou shalt know what is within thee." Obedience and love, as Christ tells us, bring an unexpected insight into divine things. Here too you may find Christ, if you never found Him before, where so many of the most deeply religious spirits of our time are finding Him, men and women who in past centuries would have sought Him in monasteries and convents. He lived on earth with the outcast, the suffering, the poor; and there you will still find Him, though you may have sought Him in vain in the homes of the rich, or in books of devotion.

" Believe it, 'tis the mass of men He loves,
And where there is most sorrow, and most want,
Where the high heart of man is trodden down
The most, there most is He : for there is He
Most needed."
LOWELL.

Again, the same combination may solve some

problems of society. One great evil of our age is the width of the breach between classes in our cities. The wedge of separation is daily being driven home by natural causes, which left to themselves will widen the breach and ruin the nation. Social Science has to find a cure for this, a cure by prevention not revolution. And in such a work religion is her best ally. Religion could at once put a hand across the breach from both sides ; it teaches the true brotherhood of men in Christ ; gives men faith in God ; teaches the rich that wealth is a splendid trust, and the poor that poverty is not ignoble. Religion alone, and I mean by that the love of God alone, could support such workers as Oberlin and Edward Denison, as Mary Carpenter and Octavia Hill, and others of that noble band, known or unknown to fame, who have served and are serving God in the service of their fellows, and are the salt of the earth.

But it is not less true that this combination of Social Science and Religion is the one condition for the permanence and true life and growth of Social Science. Social Science is ultimately based on some philosophy. It may be utilitarian and agnostic ; it may be theologic and Christian. The real danger of the students and professors of this science is that they should limit their views to practical utilities and convenience, and should study phenomena alone, and not endeavour to base their action on a real philosophy, and to guide it with a view to some high aim. This high aim, the recognition and extrication of the spiritual and divine element in man, lost and smothered as it may seem in evil, is the only worthy and permanent aim. Materialistic and evolutionary philosophies have for the time perhaps obscured this divine, supernatural

element in our sociological philosophy, or shaken confidence in it. But nevertheless this truth is the foundation of all social philosophy, and therefore of that social methodical action which we call Social Science. Utilitarianism can never be the basis of vigorous social action. Men will judge of their own interests ; and the interest of the nation and the race in the long run often conflicts with the interest of the individual in the short run. But the fundamental belief of religion that man is made in the image of God, and the belief that Christ is our Restorer and Saviour, the proof to us that love and self-devotion are essential elements of the divine and therefore of the highest human character, these are the only permanent springs of consistent endeavour to bring about the coming of the kingdom of God.

In the same combination is the hope of the Church. We must never lose the hope of attaining a less sectarian Christianity. Christianity, with all its various denominations, as it exists in England or English-speaking countries, does not fulfil the mind of Christ. Let us insist on this. We are not one in spirit. We have not got the true perspective of duties. Variety of opinion—dissent—is a sign, and healthy sign, of earnestness ; but bitterness, discord, exaggeration of differences, angry exclusiveness, ought to diminish. Now this result may be aimed at in two ways : one is by arguing about the unimportance of points of difference, and endeavouring to produce amalgamation on points of agreement. This is hopeless. The other and more hopeful way is to forget for a while the points of difference in a great enthusiasm, and thus learn by practice the points of agreement. And experience proves that the enthusiasm for social

amelioration, the infection of a grand aim, are strong enough to make Christians of all denominations work together. Any great aggressive philanthropic movement—the abolition of slavery, the promotion of temperance, the protection of women and children, the relief of great temporary local distress—does in fact bring men on the same platform, and give them mutual respect, who will meet in no other way. This is one of the signs of the times.

And we surely cannot doubt that for many ages past Christianity has too little aimed at the improvement of social conditions. It soon began to regard the earth as but a lodging place ; it forgot that the kingdoms of this world, as well as the kingdom of the next, were to become the kingdom of Christ. It is the old charge of want of patriotism. "They dwell on earth, but they are citizens of heaven," was said of the Christians of the second century. But in remembering that Christ came to save, we need not forget that He came also to heal and to fill with brotherly love, and that this was the sign of His Messiahship to which He appealed. We are too much haunted by the mediæval unchristian opposition between secular and religious. We dare not boldly say, though few will deny, that the first religious duty of a community is to make the conditions of life for every member of it such that he may arrive at the best of which he is capable. That this truth has begun to be whispered is another sign of the times. When this truth takes possession of us it will be a new departure.

A new departure of some sort is imminent. The only question is in what direction are we to work for it. I believe it is in the direction of Social

Science pursued in a religious spirit. For if Christianity moves along this line it will find itself in the first place reinforced by the irresistible democratic movement of the age. The deeply-seated inherited religious feeling of the industrial classes in England, their faith and trust in God, their wonderful kindness, patience, sympathy, hope, are still, in spite of all discouraging signs, the basis of a national religion and a national church. If Church-Christianity had in it more of these practical elements of faith and love, and less of a routine and a sentiment which seem to the poor to sanction unlimited class isolation and personal selfishness, and which are in fact so terribly frivolous and unchristian, then it would be no more possible to overturn our national church than to upset a pyramid resting on its base.

In the second place, the appearance of direct collision between religious faith and materialistic philosophy would be evaded ; they would be seen to be moving on different lines. It is true that the materialist and the Christian must always differ *toto caelo* in opinion ; but a contest about opinion would be seen to be of secondary importance as compared to the Christlike and truth-loving life ; and the life of the true Christian, as well as the life of Christ himself, will never fail to command the honour and love of the materialist. He will judge the tree by the fruits.

In the third place, Christianity would co-operate with the sociological forces of the age. The age of struggling for liberty is nearly over in England, as in America. Some few rights have yet to be won ; but the far more important question is now pressing upon the Anglo-Saxon race, What use shall be made

of liberty? Unrestrained liberty tends to widen the breach between rich and poor ; it concentrates advantages on the strong, and disadvantages on the weak. Now it is the aim of the statesman, the social reformer, and of the Christian alike to secure favourable conditions for the physical, moral, and intellectual development of every individual. We know that this can be done only by a free people imposing restraints on itself. This is the present more or less distinctly seen programme of statesmen, whether they call themselves Liberals or Conservatives. It is yours to convince the intellect as to the nature and need of such restraints. It is ours to show that this replacement of rights by duties is a part of religion ; to induce men for the love of God and their brethren to embrace and to insist on such restraints, to make morality keep pace with freedom. We must work together, neither distrusting the other. Thus alone can a free society make progress : for a nation may perish from excess of misdirected freedom. Freedom must be won only to be sacrificed to higher aims. Would that every rank in our nation were penetrated with this truth.

I know what will be said by some who hear or read these words. They will say, " You sacrifice all that is distinctive in Christianity, and then tell us that it can co-operate with science and with the other great forces of the world. But Christianity is and ever will be in antagonism with the world. Christianity is a body of doctrine entrusted to the Church of Christ as her sacred deposit to teach men how to save their souls ; it is this she must guard and preach ; mere philanthropy is a Christianity without Christ, and without the ordinances of the

Church. In other words it is not Christianity. You are trying to make men good by Acts of Parliament." If this, or any reply like this, is either fair or true, judge ye.

Others again, from an opposite camp, will say, as was said to me the other day, "I am incapable of thinking the Church anything but an obstruction to Social Science ; it is based on principles I cannot accept, barred by tests I cannot submit to."

Is then this co-operation a dream? No: it is not a dream. I believe it is coming. There is a Christianity which may yet bring back the religious spirit into daily life, a Christianity which consists in devotion to the ends for which Christ died—the union, the regeneration, the purification of the world. How can any one doubt it who believes in the Holy Spirit of God, and in His presence among us? This co-operation might excite a fresh enthusiasm from all quarters—from ourselves the clergy, who are no less influenced by the time-spirit than other men, and are almost ready to say that the most Christlike life now is to do as He did—to be silent on matters of opinion, and apply ourselves to the personal, social, and moral needs of our people, and lead them to our Father in Heaven. It would surely call out fresh enthusiasm from our devout communicants, who week by week or month by month devote themselves to God's service. "What are you ready to do?" might be the question put to every communicant, as it is already the question put to every adult member of some American churches. It might recruit the ranks of our clergy with men who need this vent for their practical energy and devotion. It would open fresh possibilities to that large mass of our fellow-countrymen who see no middle course

between materialism and sacerdotalism, which lead to anarchy and revolt ; and who would see in this development the natural outgrowth of the best side of Protestantism, and the natural reaction against its worst—a Protestantism embracing as frankly the historical criticism and the science of the present as it embraced the revival of learning in the past, and once more including in its ranks the representatives of highest thought. It is a religion which reminds us more of the prophetic and apostolic ideals than of the mediæval and modern ; it does not require us to make a sharp contrast between things secular and sacred, things natural and supernatural ; it does not require us to turn our backs on the world to look at God, or on God to look at the world. It does require modesty in its ministers. It does require the “fruits of the Spirit” in all. Surely the time is ripe for such a growth ; surely the hour is at hand when the hope of the age shall find a voice in prophet and poet and priest and people, and the world shall wake to its great inheritance in the Gospel of Christ.

To preach such a Christianity we need the help of associations like yours. It is not ignorant and uncombined philanthropical views, not more charity sermons that are needed, or more so-called charity, but the utilisation of our ministry to enable Christian communities to co-operate for their highest well-being, the scientific organisation and direction of religious zeal.

But it is time to conclude ; and I will only say one word more. Aim high, and never despair. There is plenty to do on the largest scale : education, land laws, drink laws, prostitution, vagabondism,—but it would be presumptuous in me to attempt to

enumerate. Let no private right be pleaded as an excuse for public wrongs. For private rights compensation can be found. There is none for a public wrong. Let no one think that our present shameful condition is inevitable ; it is the result of our past and present laws. It is *our* duty to protect the weak. The helpless and the poor cannot protect themselves against ignorance, vice, ill sanitation, overwork, tyranny. The study of other countries will help to point out the causes of the evil ; it is yours to find them out, and to blazon them abroad with the utmost publicity in your power, and to persevere till they are remedied. Never despair. I know that it is heart-breaking to

“Haggle with prejudice for pennyworths
Of that reform which your hard toil will make
A common birthright of the age to come.”

But this endurance and faith and chivalry is the special virtue of a Social Reformer, and without it you are talkers and no more.

And let each one carry into effect in his own person this identification of religion and work for others. Let him do something for his city, his parish—nay, for one street, one household. Give something more than money : your time, your thought, your love. You are not called on to reform the world ; you are called on to do something for your neighbours, to show that you have the spirit of Christ.

It is a pleasure to me to utter these words of hopefulness in Nottingham, for I know no city in the country which is more enlightened, more public-spirited. You have done something. But you know, better than I can know, what work has yet to

be done, before you can think or speak without sorrow and shame of the condition, social and religious, of thousands upon thousands in this place. But this work may be done ; and it is a glorious sight to see Nottingham welcoming the students of Social Science within the walls of her grand old church of St. Mary's—a triple alliance of common sense and science and religion in the cause of patriotism and humanity.

Finally, let us pray for God's blessing on this meeting, that it may be marred by no jealousies or thought of winning fame ; but that love to God and man may rule in your hearts, and that the Holy Spirit may guide all your counsels to the glory of God in the well-being of man.

II

ON TAKING HOLY ORDERS¹

“Let your light so shine before men.”—MATT. v. 16.

THIS is the scriptural sanction for the grand motto of this University, *Hinc lucem et pocula sacra*.

From our agricultural counties, where the labourer is toiling “for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread,” from the busy manufacturing cities and sea-ports, where all is made and imported that ministers to comfort, the eyes of Cambridge men often turn hitherward to watch how their old University is fulfilling her function in the economy of the nation. Her function is to supply *lucem et pocula sacra*.

First *lucem*. It is not a secondary, it is a primary function of the University to give light; and our glory is that light, on dark places of theology and scholarship and science, has been and is given by our professors from Erasmus to Lightfoot, from Martin Bucer and Barrow to Westcott and Hort, from Newton and Cotes to Stokes and Cayley and Adams, and many others, past and present, whom it is impossible to enumerate. Till you have been in a campaign you do not know the value of fortresses, and till you have been engaged in a battle with dis-

¹ Preached in Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, 25th February 1883.

tortions of truth and sham learning, with little leisure of your own for investigation, you do not know the value of having men behind you on whose learning you may rely.

But it is not given to all men to furnish *lucem*. That is the privilege of the few. Let us turn to the *pocula sacra*, and ask why does the University contribute so little to what ought to be its highest aim, the religious elevation of the nation. I am not using this phrase in any narrow sense ; I mean it to include all that sweetens, deepens, consecrates the life of the nation ; all the "light" that ought to "shine before men," all the learning and spiritual movement that ought to flow from us into the remotest corners of the land.

Much of this work may of course be done by laymen, but the chief opportunity is in the hands of the clergy. They have every advantage—an assigned district, a recognised position, the right to an initiative, the co-operation of the best people everywhere, the consciousness of the sacredness of their calling, continuity with the past, a certainty of appreciative welcome for any genuine work, and a tiptoe expectation of some new departure in religious energy.

Why, then, to come to my special point, does Cambridge contribute so small a fraction out of her ever-growing numbers to the lists of men who take Holy Orders? Why do some of the ablest and best among you, with every qualification that man can see, with an inward bias and call to this work, with high and unselfish enthusiasm and genuine goodness, yet from this work turn reluctantly and slowly away?

I propose to attempt to answer this question at least in part, and I trust that the attempt will not be

quite profitless, even to the majority of you who naturally have no such call. The matter is of high importance to us all, for the misconceptions, which deter some men from taking orders, quite as deeply affect those who never thought of taking orders themselves. But I am speaking primarily to the modest and thoughtful man, impelled to this work by a secret desire, yet held back by reasons which he has scarcely dared to formulate or examine.

With such men the refusal is not due to want of enthusiasm, or to any fears that the work may be unremunerative or insecure. It is not due to want of motive ; it is due to counteracting misconceptions. Partly it is due to sheer ignorance of the demand. "The harvest truly is plenteous and the labourers are few." To say nothing of the need of the upper and middle classes for learning and leadership and teaching, you are almost as ignorant as schoolboys of the condition of the great artisan classes. You know neither the fierce antagonisms and unchristian negations of some, nor the ignorant and cruel teaching which passes current among others as Christianity, and which, whether further distorted or not by secularists, is alienating many of the best among the people. You do not and cannot know the real goodness and patience and brotherly kindness and trust in God that this class possesses, or of the welcome they give to an educated man who comes to them like a friend. If you knew how your work is wanted, or how it would be appreciated, what good work you might do for God and man, it would, I think, be felt by many of you to be a new call and a new opening. I am sure therefore that one reason why men do not take orders is simple ignorance of

the demand for men, of the nature of the work, of the qualifications for it, and of the interest and reward it brings.

Another reason is the honest but weak fear of misconstruction. "I should like to take orders," a quite representative man told me lately; "but I should be thought by my father to be believing many things which I don't believe, and I should feel like a hypocrite: I could never explain to him. My own college friends would think my taking orders a not very creditable matter of business. Though my opinions would not really prevent me from taking orders honourably, yet I should be thought to have adopted conventional opinions against which I have often protested. I cannot expose myself to this misconstruction."

Surely not a very strong reason! But there does lie below it the fact that the conventional opinion of the clergy is far below the level even of their own real opinion, and still further below the level of advanced learning; and that the timidity or reticence of religious men does deter others from entering a profession in which a contrast between word and thought is believed to be almost a necessity. Yet no such necessity exists. It is a misconception which is being daily removed.

Again, there is great misconception as to the extent to which a man pledges himself to believe certain articles of faith. "How can I," said another man, "sign the thirty-nine articles, and express my belief of every one of the six hundred statements and doctrines they are said to contain?" But there is no such signing, and no such expression of belief required. The declaration is as follows: "I assent

to the thirty-nine articles of religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. I believe the Doctrine of the Church of England as therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God ; and in public prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the Form in the said book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority."

This has been the form of declaration for some years past ; and the additional latitude given by it has been of great service. The declaration intentionally expresses belief only in the general conformity of the doctrine of the Church of England with the Word of God, and not a belief of each and every statement in the articles.

But far graver difficulties and misconceptions remain, and are of a kind that most affect the deepest minds. Let us look them full in the face. "Much as I should wish to take orders," a man will say, "and that on many grounds—chiefly, I think, because it would give me an opportunity for usefulness in life which I do not see elsewhere,—still I cannot honestly do so. My old orthodox religious beliefs—if indeed I can call by the name of beliefs those untested, unexamined opinions which I had as a boy—have been dissolved since I came to Cambridge, in this atmosphere of knowledge and criticism and exact thought. I used to think every word of the Bible historically true, and of divinely guaranteed accuracy ; now parts of it seem to me to be un-historical. I used to think all the books of the New Testament had equal and unquestioned authority. The critical studies of this place have dissipated that belief. I do not know how to reconcile what is, I

suppose, the orthodox view of inspiration with what seem to me the highly probable or established results of criticism. I once believed, or fancied I believed, a certain form of the doctrine of the atonement. I seldom or never now hear it preached on, and in its old form I am unable to retain belief in it. Yet to hold this form is, I suppose, essential for one who is going to take orders. I once believed, or fancied I believed, certain eschatological doctrines, which now repel me as incredible, and certain doctrines of metaphysical theology to which I now find myself unable to attach any distinct meaning. I cannot, therefore, take orders, for the simple reason that when I am not vague I am, I fear, unorthodox." Such is surely a not uncommon frame of mind among some of the best men, from whom, nevertheless, the very best recruits for the ranks of the clergy might be obtained, could certain misconceptions be removed.

For, let me say, there is no subject on which men find it so difficult to get accurate information, and are in consequence so ill-informed, as on the limits of orthodoxy. There are views, widely current, legitimate perhaps, as being within the large sphere assigned by the Church to opinion, but which have no claim to monopolise the title of orthodox. It is of first-rate importance, not only as affecting the particular question why the best men do not take orders, but as bearing on the whole relation of the Church to the educated classes, that the sphere of Christian doctrine should not be considered co-extensive with the sphere of human opinion. Doctrines are few and simple : opinions are innumerable and indefinable. Yet to disentangle the two

spheres is both difficult and dangerous. The orthodoxy, as it considers itself, of a large part of the so-called religious world is a widely different thing from the real orthodoxy of the past or of the learned in the present. It is not the orthodoxy of the Church. It is traditional, still largely due to the keen logical mind of Calvin and the remoter influence of Augustine ; it is far narrower than the true Church thought, and it is in many respects timid and illogical and intolerant. Further, this body of opinion which looms delusively before men's minds as the Church thought, or as orthodoxy, is responsible for most of those views which some of you have regretfully been driven to abandon, for most of those views which are repellent to the scientific and critical habits of mind which a University education naturally and rightly develops, for most of those views which appear to you speculatively incomprehensible or morally defective.

It is, I repeat, of nothing less than first-rate importance, in view of the present needs of the Church and the country, that light should be thrown on these misconceptions by learned and clear thinkers in our Church, and above all by the recognised teachers of the country and the University. The full width of views tolerated within the Church should be made known, and that with some degree of authority. Nothing so disarms the opposition of secularists, nothing so wins the men of strong faith and purpose, as the discovery how liberal Church thought really is, how widely unlike the straw figure so often put in its place, and so easily demolished.

It is misconceptions on this point that keep back many men from taking orders, and it may therefore

be well to be somewhat more explicit, as far as the limits of time will permit.

First, on the subject of Inspiration. On this subject I have been within the last few days giving two lectures¹ to artisans and others in Bristol, and holding very interesting discussions. The experience is therefore fresh and vivid in my mind how much the misconception of Church teaching on this point has to do with unbelief in all classes. Verbal inspiration—a divinely guaranteed perfect accuracy—was the only inspiration of which the secularists were able to conceive as the Church teaching. It was the incredibility of this that had driven some men out of Christianity.

I know also that the same misconception makes it impossible to some men to think of taking orders. It would seem to them to involve a dishonesty of mind.

Yet the Church thought on inspiration is something totally different, as I have endeavoured to show at length in those lectures. In precisely the same way the true Church thought on the doctrine of the atonement is a very different thought from the terrible misrepresentation of it with which we have been familiar. Let me read you a quotation from a sermon preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the last meeting of the British Association: "I know not," he said, "whether any stern or any sensuous religion of heathendom has held up before men's astonished eyes features more appalling and more repulsive than those of the vindictive father, or of the arbitrary distributor of two eternities, or again of the easy compromiser of offences in return

¹ Published by the S.P.C.K.

for houses and lands. Dreadful shadows under which tens of thousands have been reared." How many noble minds has such a thought averted from their natural destination as religious teachers of the nation.

So, too, it is certain that there is great latitude of opinion permissible in the Church on eschatology, and on many speculative points on which men in the past have dogmatised far beyond the clear teaching of revelation, or the possibilities of human knowledge, or the sanction of the united Church of Christ—speculative points on which men have drawn logical inferences in regions of thought where logic is unavailable. Surely it is time to recognise the fact of this latitude, and to proclaim it aloud.

Hence, to resume, if any one is prevented from taking orders solely by the fear that all his old orthodox beliefs are dissolved, let him carefully examine whether it is not rather the popular unauthorised beliefs that have fallen away at the touch of thought, leaving, it may be, the true Church beliefs still unassailed. So it certainly is in many cases. Look then at what remains, and see whether it is not more truly the Church thought than that which is gone. If you cannot satisfy yourself, consult some really learned and responsible theologian as to the degree of latitude permitted on any point. You will perhaps find that your reluctance is based on a mere misconception.

Perhaps I may be permitted to refer to one book, which I have found of the highest value. It is a book privately printed many years ago, and lately published, entitled *Catholic Thoughts*.¹ It is a storehouse of thought on four great subjects—the

¹ Messrs. Isbister and Co.

Church of Christ, the Church of England, the Bible, and Theology. A late Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity—a name ever to be honoured in this place, Professor Selwyn—used to give it occasionally to young men with the remark, “I hope it may help you as much as it has helped me: I know no book to which I am more indebted.”

But to resume. Besides men who might fear that they would be vague or unorthodox, there are men, with a strong natural vocation for this work, who would nevertheless say that they were held back by objections that went deeper still. “The effect,” they might urge, “of the modern scientific habit of thought is to indispose the mind to accept any discontinuity, whether in inspiration or miracle. And without a frank and confident acceptance of such discontinuity, how can they take orders?” I would ask them in return, “Is it quite certain that such discontinuity must be accepted in religious thought to a greater extent than it is provisionally accepted in the most rigid scientific thought?” I am not prepared to answer this question in the affirmative. In theological as in scientific speculation mysteries are but pushed farther back. *Omnia exeunt in mysterium.* In science, indeed, unlike theology, it is not the mysteries that obtrude themselves on the young student; but are there not mysteries in the hypothetical ether, in the action of force at a distance, in all vital action, in the relation of the brain to thought, to say nothing of the problems of free will and determinism? Further thought may enable you to accept seeming discontinuities in theology, not less than in science, as provisionally expressing the highest knowledge which man has attained or God revealed.

And the very doctrine of continuity, which has laid such hold on our minds, is itself, in another aspect, the very strongest argument for my purpose, which is to convince you that old truths seen in new light must contain the teaching the age needs. There is no such thing as a new departure in religion. Even Christ came "not to destroy, but to fulfil."

It is quite impossible to suppose that in England the divorce of the highest intellect from religion will be permanent. In Protestant countries intellect and religion can only stand apart by mistake. Protestantism is not a mere protest against error, but against stationariness. Protestantism welcomes new learning of all kinds, even though the new learning will modify its beliefs and dissolve its prejudices. At the very heart of our religion is the conviction that while Christianity is permanent, opinion is transient, and knowledge will grow. And this conviction is not less the note of true Catholicism. If the Church is to be universal she must absorb all that is true wherever she finds it. "Christianity is the most mutable of all things," said Rothe; "that is its especial glory."

It is the work of this age to develop this conviction of Catholic Protestantism, and to claim that our Church shall welcome new learning and science, and shall not stand or fall with its traditionary unessential accretions. It is for this that your help is so much needed, and this is a work that you would find of surpassing interest and importance.

You cannot doubt that this work requires ability and wisdom. All through the ranks, from our bishops and professors down to the curate at work in a suburban district, the task is one of great diffi-

culty, and one that requires knowledge and judgment. Many good people think that all that is necessary is to send ill-instructed curates and Scripture-readers and Bible-women among the artisans: you might as well send squirts to put out a conflagration. But I wish you could see the effect of a single able and good man appearing on the scene. His "men's mutual" soon fills, and then his evening classes, and in a short time the rumour spreads that there is a *man* at work among them, and his church or his mission-room fills with men, young men and middle-aged men—not women and children, but *men* thirsting for teaching. Such a man is doing the work of this University. *HINC lucem et pocula sacra*. Such a man many a one of you might be.

There must be something between the dynamite party of mere destructives who would uproot the Church of Christ entirely in their mistaken zeal to destroy its caricatures, and the cast-iron party that forgets nothing and learns nothing. Does there still linger a notion that there is a necessary connection between religion and imbecility? A little experience would show the most sceptical how far otherwise is the fact. In Church work, as in other work, the same high faculties are needed, and are found, though alas too rarely—the seeing eye, the truthful mind, wisdom, courage.

Religion deals with realities which are represented to us by symbols. As age after age passes some symbols are outgrown, and our age is no exception.

We call it an age of transition. All ages are ages of transition. We are outgrowing symbols and feeling for the reality. It is of primary importance that the men who are finding the reality, and could never-

theless use the symbol as a symbol, should not be driven by their own brethren either to say the symbol is the reality, or to deny the existence of the reality altogether. This would be to exclude some of the noblest of our young brothers. But such is the liberty of the Church of England, rightly understood, that this is not a necessary alternative in order that you should work in her ranks. Before any of you truthful and modest souls puts aside the thought of Holy Orders, with a sigh, as a work from which, with all his leaning to it, he is excluded, let him frankly consult some living authority. His own interpretation of Scripture and doctrine may be biassed to an unknown extent by popular theology, and may be little better than a mass of misconceptions.

Others again feel that to take orders is to make a leap in the dark. They feel that they might now take orders ; but also that they might one day find too late that they had made a mistake, and that they really have neither the faith nor the sympathy, nor the intellectual power and patience for the work. To such I would say, Try the work for a year as a layman. Combine study with practical work. Whatever your profession may ultimately be, you will be all the better equipped if you know something of work of this kind ; you will be richer in experience, in sympathy, and in knowledge of men. Write to any bishop, and ask for lay work under a suitable man in a large town ; and at the end of a year you will know whether you are capable of doing the work. If you are, you will scarcely find other work in the world so happy, so effective, and that brings such interest and such gratitude.

I have said nothing of motives for taking orders,

and have only attempted to remove some misconceptions which do actually hold men back in spite of the best and highest motives. But I cannot conclude without saying that if we feel, as many of us do feel, that our life is a trust given us by God to use in His service, and not for pleasure only ; if we feel that in some way we "are not our own," but are "entrusted with a stewardship" ; if we love and desire to serve the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ—then the call to this work is very strong, so strong as to be almost irresistible.

Formerly the Church inspired a dim uninquiring religiousness throughout the nation. That is so now to a far less extent, especially in our cities, and among the more intelligent classes. This religiousness was tinged with superstition, and was connected with beliefs that were in a measure erroneous. A lower form of Christianity has, in fact, left or is leaving the nation. And the question for us to ask is, Are we supplying the higher? Are we giving the *pocula sacra* to the thirsty land? "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Whence is it to come? Where are the future prophets of the nation? Shall Cambridge reply, We know not—and care not ; let us alone.

You may rely on it that a new era is dawning on the Church of England. We have been contending too long for symbols and shadows. The time is at hand when we shall find that we agree more nearly on realities, and can be tolerant about symbols whether in doctrine or ritual. Already we can trace the outline of the future active party in the Church, springing, after a long-arrested development, from the most enthusiastic Church feeling when brought in contact

with the actual needs of the masses that make the nation : a party at once orthodox and liberal, conservative and enlightened ; giving more of Christianity instead of less ; standing on the old lines as symbols, but permitting greater learning and greater freedom in their interpretation and their use. This party may be joined by the earnest, by the men of faith and hope in God and man, even though their opinions are, as they ought to be, still unformed. One attitude of mind only is inconsistent with joining in such work ; it is the attitude of iconoclasm and indignant negation. But in contact with actual facts we soon lay aside this iconoclasm as a folly of youth ; we *antiquate* errors rather than ridicule them ; we do our utmost to preserve in order that we may fulfil.

May it long be the work of Cambridge to welcome all new learning, to open the kingdom of heaven to men, to spread light in dark places, to distribute far and wide through the land, in a spirit of wisdom and tolerance, the eternal and sacred verities of religion and revelation.

“ Whom shall I send ? ” saith the Lord, now as in Isaiah’s days,—“ Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? ” May the answer grow from a whisper to an imperious voice in many a heart, “ Lord, here am I—send me.”

III

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND BROTHERHOOD OF MAN¹

“Our Father which art in heaven.”—MATT. vi. 9.

IN my last sermon before the University I spoke of the reasons which are at present deterring some men from taking orders, and I endeavoured to show that some of these reasons were founded on misconceptions. To-day I intend to endeavour to interpret to you the great religious impulse which is so full of hope, and is so profoundly affecting this generation, both in Cambridge and throughout the country, and which is making men feel that those reasons are irrelevant, or inadequate, or, if not these, that they must be removed. The stream is too full to flow in its old channel.

I say, endeavour to interpret, because the real meaning and origin of such a religious impulse is not always recognised at the time. We can look back at the period of Wesley, or the Reformation, and from this distance we can discriminate the ideas that were coming into distinctness at these or similar periods. But in the ages themselves this was difficult. It was a confused struggle in which even the chief actors scarcely understood the significance of their own actions.

¹ Preached in Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, 28th October 1883.

It may, however, surprise some persons to hear it said that there is a religious impulse so profoundly affecting us. They would appeal to prevailing unbeliefs, and deny the existence of any such religious movement at all. No, I would say confidently: faith has but changed its form; the unbeliefs are mainly irrelevant or superficial. There is a deep, almost voiceless current of faith below, far deeper than the unbelief, which shows itself by many signs. It would take too long to speak of the signs of this religious impulse in the country at large, but I may very briefly remind you of the indications of it in the changes that have lately come over Cambridge. During the last fifteen years, the Church, we are told, has lost her hold on the Universities; and we hear men deploring in the country that the colleges are godless—as if the new statutes of a college could drive out God. And yet it is certain that here and now there is more religious life, and more active Church work, and far truer and keener religious interests, than when I was an undergraduate twenty-five years ago. What, then, is the nature of the religious impulse that is at work? “They are very good young men nowadays,” said an old lady to me, “but I am sure I don’t know why. They don’t seem to me to believe anything.” That is the problem I want to consider. It is certain that the old motives are to a large extent dissipated or powerless. They survive in books, but not in living hearts; not in the hearts of the young and sensitive, who are the index of the future.

It is not fear of punishment. It may be doubted indeed whether that ever kept men from sin, or impelled them to good. It is not, in our class at any rate, the hope of saving our individual souls. For

some reason we cannot make this motive touch us. It may be a magnet, but we are not magnetised. We listen, we read about it, we don't deny it, nay, we cherish the hope, but we don't move to it. There is no "atrophy of our religious sense." Our sense is vivid enough, but irresponsive to this motive. It is no philosophy of utility, no consideration of the greatest good of the greatest number. This is sometimes a useful criterion of conduct, but is never a force. "Why am I to seek the greatest happiness of the greatest number?" That is a question that this philosophy leaves unanswered, and a motive it leaves unsupplied. It is not a vivid and defined faith, as taught by the authority of the Church, that moves men now. We listen to the eloquent claims of priests, Roman or Anglican, as they dogmatise on the undefinable, and overawe us with mysteries and solemnities ; and then we go out into the fresh air and sunlight, and throw it all aside, and go on under a deeper guidance. It is not the authority of doctrines founded on biblical texts. They are demonstrated irrefutably ; we listen to a system and its formulas and phrases. But they have somehow lost touch with many of us ; we tolerate them, as we still tolerate the Athanasian creed, read in some churches this morning, but they do not affect us. They pass by us ; they have no fruit in action. We know instinctively that they are survivals, that the truth is larger than the dogma ; and we turn to the ever-fresh and simple words of Christ with a sense of unspeakable relief. In them there is life and power. Yet though it is not any of the old religious motives which impel us, there is a force somewhere ; a force which carries us all on,—the great non-religious and

semi-religious world, as well as the so-called religious world,—in spite of all retarding and destructive agencies. Differing and rival sects, Church Unions, and Church Associations, and all that they imply, are unable to ruin the cause of true religion. The tide carries them with it in its mighty rush, like bubbles and froth on the surface. We do our work in some form or other, because we must, under some heavenly attraction. A conviction deeper than words is within our souls. Can we attempt to give it form or name? Can we for an instant see the “buried life” of this generation—the conviction below its beliefs?

The hidden force which impels us is the conviction, the feeling, the instinct, the consciousness, the revelation, call it what we will, of the *Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—a brotherhood bound up in some unspeakable relation to Christ*. In a certain sense we are familiar enough with these words; but they are true in a sense far deeper than our familiarity extends—deeper than any thoughts or words will reach. This fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, this unity of Nature in relation to a Spiritual Being, underlies our poetry, our science, our social aspirations, our politics, our philosophy, our religious movements; it is surely the fundamental motive of the day, operating even where it is quite unsuspected.

To illustrate my meaning with any degree of completeness would require many sermons; but, happily, many illustrations are not needed in addressing this audience. You will fill up my scanty paragraphs. First, as to poetry. It is God's fatherhood of the world and of ourselves; it is our kinship to Nature

which is the source of our indescribable love for it. There is no deeper depth in us than our love of flowers, and sunny slopes, and sea, and sky, and our fellow-creatures. Look at a child with flowers, or with its pet animals. How it loves them! I say its love is a consequence, as it is an unconscious acknowledgment, of kinship. We love Nature because we are of it, and from it, and in it. And the poet feels this kinship with a finer sense than others, and can express it for us. We may think we love *Nature*, and learn from *Nature*. It is that we are loving *God*, and learning from Him and from His works. This is the thought, the revelation, often unexpressed, that lies below Wordsworth's interpreting love of Nature. Every one will recall the lines—almost too familiar to quote—which express this most precisely :—

“ I have felt
A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows, and the woods,
And mountains——”

The presence to Wordsworth was not always, as here, indefinite, unnamed ; he knew that “ of God—of God they are ” ; it was the Eternal Father of all that inspired him, as it inspired Milton with this pure love—

“ These are Thy works, Parent of Good !
Almighty. Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair.”

D

We can at present, perhaps, but faintly and unconsciously enter into this rich companionship, but we all share it: our eyes and our senses may be too dimmed and too blurred to perceive the Presence; but that is the secret of our love of Nature. It is an acknowledgment of the universal Fatherhood of God; an acknowledgment deeper than words, not the less divine in origin, even where unsuspected or unexpressed.

Precisely the same truth is taught us by the very different processes of science,—science, which is sometimes regarded as the antagonist of poetry. For science, especially in its modern and most fascinating developments, is full of the grand thought of relationship and continuity; it is revealing a foundation, in fact, for the prophetic fancies of the poet. The unity of Nature is now not only a magnificent poetical conception, it is almost a demonstrated theorem as well.

And if we turn to our social aspirations and our politics, we find that they too are penetrated with this idea of the brotherhood of man, which is so closely akin to the Fatherhood of God. The great democratic movements everywhere; the passion for liberty; the socialistic dreams and organisations; the numerous societies and associations; the schemes of practical philanthropy; the marvellous brotherly kindness of the poor to one another; the thrill of response that true brotherliness evokes; the verdict, spoken or felt, that is passed on all unbrotherliness, and especially on the unbrotherliness of parties and sects of Christians; the sickening horror that we feel as we read of the failure of civilisation in our great cities; the passionate impulse to be up and doing,—all

directly and plainly arise from this instinct of brotherhood. The University is responsive to this impulse in many forms. It is at present an instinct rather than a creed. But our hearts are responsive to it, as the drops in the ocean are responsive to the far-off unseen attraction. Some day it may become a creed.

But, you may say, supposing this analysis were true ; supposing that this idea of the unity of Nature and brotherhood of man really is the common thread that runs through our poetry, our science, our social aspirations ; supposing that it is the idea of the century,—is it as a religious impulse that we ought to regard it ? What has it to do with Christianity ?

What is Christianity, I reply, without it ? Surely it is no less fundamental a thought in Christianity than it is in poetry or science. When Christ taught us to pray to "Our Father in Heaven," He gave us the very climax of His revelation of God. The two great commandments in which He summed up the law may be restated thus : "Realise the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

This thought may seem to you to have little in common with religion, as it ordinarily presents itself. True ; but I must beg you, therefore, to distinguish for a moment between religion and revelation. They are not one thing, they are two ; more often opposed than co-operating. The opposition may be seen in every age, in every country ; pre-eminently it may be seen in the Bible. The Old Testament is the history, not of a religion, but of the struggle between religious instincts and the higher light, which we must call revelation, that constantly opposed those instincts. The religious instincts, the devotion to

cultus and dogma, were strong in the Jews, and took the form of idolatry at one time, of temple worship and ritual at another ; but they were always leading them wrong—into superstition, hardness, sacerdotalism, and low views of God. The revelation through the prophets was always contending with these lower religious instincts, always dwelling on the elementary virtues, on justice, brotherhood, and love. The Fatherhood of God was being slowly revealed by God to the prophet, and through the prophet to the people. This was the essence of the Old Testament revelation. But the Old Testament closes in gloom with the silence of revelation and the triumph of the lower religious instincts. We see “no prophet any more,” and we soon see Pharisees.

When Christ came, He came as one of the prophets ; He came to continue, to complete this suspended revelation. He revealed His Father to man. He brought us straight into God’s presence. He called us children of God. He did not found a new religion. It would be truer to say, He showed the mistake, the obscurantism of religion. In other words, He showed that the relations of man to God were not expressible by cultus and dogma, but they were expressible by the filial relation to God and by the brotherly relation to man. He showed us the type of a perfect brother. Revelation was, therefore, once more in conflict with religion ; Christ was in conflict with the Pharisees and Scribes. The religious instincts were mighty, and all but universal ; they had found their uncompromising foe in the person of Christ, and a few humble followers ; and the eternal contest reached its climax in the cry, “Crucify him ! crucify him !”

But the voice of revelation was not silenced ; Christ's words are still and for ever true ; though for so long, for so many centuries, these great revealed truths, the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, have been overlaid by religion, that is, by cultus and dogma, which do but obscure the truths which they ought to illuminate. These truths have been half hidden by superstition and a terrible theology, but they have lain treasured in the silence of human breasts, and now at length men are beginning to realise them. "We know that we are the sons of God," is our unspoken creed. It is a revealed truth that now shines by its own light ; would that it could enter into every individual heart and shine there.

I have used the phrase "revelation" of the truth, because that seems to me the truest way of describing the process by which it has become the property of the human race. For the human race is the manifestation of God's purposes. At any rate, we know of no other manifestation ; and, therefore, the great truths that men have mastered are, in whatever way they have come to man, a part and a stage of God's education of the race. But it is equally true to speak of these truths as discovered by man. Some thinkers prefer this expression. "As far as I am concerned," says Darwin, "I think there has been no revelation." But this is not so blank a contradiction of the revelation-theory as it seems. For discovery and revelation are not antagonistic terms. They are two aspects of the same process. God reveals by man's discoveries ; man discovers through God's revelation. There is a point of view from which discovery and revelation are identical. The processes of science are most characteristically described as discovery ; the intui-

tions of the prophet and the poet are more fitly described as revelation. Whether, then, we describe this growing instinct of the unity of Nature, the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, as God's revelation now more clearly seen, or as the result of human discoveries, is not of the first importance. It is the fact, not the theory about the fact, that is essential.

If a few more words may be permitted, I should like to revert to the phrase used above—a "brotherhood bound up in some unspeakable relation to Christ." What is the relation of Christ to this feeling of brotherhood? It will not be expected that this relation, which St. Paul strove hard to realise and to illustrate by various metaphors, can be defined in a few phrases. Further, it is a relation which is spiritual, not material, and does not need our realisation of it in order to become real. It will assume many forms in different minds, and all the forms may be but aspects of the same truth. It is not possible, even if it were desirable, to dogmatise on the nature of this relationship. But if we endeavour to answer the question, "What place has Christ in this feeling of 'brotherhood'?" and if we look to His own teaching, and not to any system, subsequently constructed, for the answer, we shall probably arrive at some such thoughts as these. Christ is the fulfilment of God's purposes in man; He did the will of His Father perfectly. He realised in perfection the sense of God's Fatherhood; His love, obedience, union, and identity with the Father were perfect. He showed to mankind the perfection of brotherhood; free from all national and sectarian and class and personal prejudices; free alike from selfish aims and all

ostentation of unselfishness ; He realised—what we can but dream of—the perfect Brother. He did therefore reveal in His own person, as no man could have done, the central truths of religion, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man ; these are seen in Christ.

But we should feel that this is inadequate. There is a closer relationship if we can but express it. Perhaps we may approach it thus. Our individualism is not absolute ; we are not units, we are linked by myriad ties of heredity to the generations that precede. These links constitute the family, the nation, the race ; and in some way there are spiritual links that bind all our souls together in one life, a life which proceeds ultimately from Christ the Son of God, who is the head and fount of all life. The origin of our spiritual unity is the fact that our spirits are derivatives from one origin, and that origin the Christ “ that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” But in such thoughts we soon lose ourselves ; and such thoughts are not necessary to the life of true religion and the life in Christ.

I have spoken of brotherliness to man and sonship to God as the source of the great religious impulse that we are all more or less feeling. Now the advantage, in practice, of clearly understanding the nature of the great impulse at work amongst us is this. It gives confidence. It enables us to estimate the conflicting tendencies at work. It shows us how the main stream is setting, and enables us to avoid the backwaters and stagnant pools. You ask yourself instinctively how this or that bears on these great principles. And you will find this test useful in solving many a perplexity ; it will prevent your

wasting years on experiments that must prove barren.

Take, for example, questions of Church parties, or of taking orders. The real question is, How can I best express and stimulate in others the feeling of brotherhood in Christ? If vestments and rituals and sacerdotal claims—unknown to Christ and his followers,—if these and similar survivals from a darker age best represent the brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God, and rouse pure brotherly conduct in those who witness them, let us have them, in God's name. If brass bands, and street processions, and Hallelujah hymns develop the feeling of brotherhood better, I am for the brass bands and the streets. If good schools, and charity organisations, and White Cross Armies, and workmen's clubs, and cheap concerts, and recreation grounds, and Artisans' Dwellings Acts are the better way, let us strive to get them by all means. For if you have one strong guiding principle, like that of realising brotherhood, you will welcome any work which tends in this direction; and not shut yourself up in a sour religionism, or not less sour anti-religionism. An enthusiasm for a great cause makes you cheerfully tolerate, and even sympathise and co-operate with minor enthusiasms if they tend aright. It gives room for wide diversities of good life, such as do exist, and it effaces the false distinction of the religious and the secular.

But the true brotherly mind will find a more excellent way than is found in any of these alone.

The sense of kinship adds an indescribable wholesomeness and brightness to our religion. It often takes us years to shake off the belief that somehow grasps us in youth, that religion consists in a certain

attitude of mind, into which we must force ourselves by some external influence ; that certain postures of body or of mind are worship. We have yet to learn that the *θρησκεία καθαρὰ* is charity, and unworldliness, and purity, that the only ritual which is of the essence of Christianity is the attitude and posture of a brother among his brothers in the presence of the eternal Father of all nature and all mankind. It gives a practical, though unattainable ideal of life. It strikes at impurity (*ἀδελφήν τις μοιχέυσει* ;) ; at selfishness ; at frivolity ; at the weary melancholy of life. It overcomes evil with good. It harmonises our scale of virtues. Generosity, brotherliness, ought to be high in the scale ; we know they ought, and they are so. It makes a gentleman and a Christian more nearly synonymous terms than they have sometimes been, because it affects our conception both of the ideal gentleman and the ideal Christian. Both of them are the ideal brother.

And here I must conclude. These final years of the century are full of hope and promise. For this truth is laying its grasp on the young, and ennobles all on whom it lays its grasp, and you may live to see it shining forth in strength and purity.

But beware of the foes of this truth. Everything that keeps us from saying "Our Father" in all its fulness and simplicity and universality ; all views of wealth, whether of money, or power, or intellect, other than as a trust held for the brotherhood ; all selfishness ; all exaggeration of religion in the direction of either cultus or dogma ; all these are foes.

And there is one mistake which you may make— a generous mistake, but one which may nevertheless mar your usefulness for many a year. It is the mis-

take of thinking that brotherliness will do without Christ. Let me tell you a true story that I heard yesterday. It contains the whole matter. Some of the best and ablest of the students at a women's college opened a class for teaching the poorest of the men in a neglected suburb. They were fired by the noblest impulse ; to give themselves to work for their unfortunate brothers. They read to them, they taught them reading and writing, they sang to them, and the men gathered to them in increasing numbers. After some months they asked the men whether there was anything in particular that they wanted to hear more about. There was silence ; and then a low inaudible voice was heard from among them. One of the women went up to the speaker : "What was it you wished specially to hear about ?" she asked. "Could you tell us," he replied, "something about the Lord Jesus Christ ?" This story needs no comment.

Let me add another. A friend in one of our great cities wrote the other day : "Six years' experience of work of many kinds in this city have taught me to expect nothing from philanthropy that does not spring from religion. Six years ago I should have said exactly the opposite. But then I had no experience, or but little."

Such, O young men of Cambridge, is the deep-seated and universal power ; which is discernible on all sides, as the motive power of goodness springing from God himself ; the hope of humanity, the goal of moral evolution, and central truth of revelation ; it is the sonship to God and brotherhood of man, unveiled and made intelligible to men, "at sundry times and in divers manners," and chiefly in the person of Jesus Christ. Now we can but grope for words, and

our tongues stammer with the greatness of the thought. But you are young, and "to be young is very heaven¹;" for you may live to see this thought find a voice—you may yourselves give this thought a voice. Who should give it a voice if not you in your wealth and strength and happiness? And you may see the world re-echo it as the truth it has waited for and looked for so long. Till then pray we with ever fuller meaning to Our Father in Heaven.

IV

DUTY AND RELIGION¹

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”—MATT. vii. 21.

PERHAPS the time has now come when these words of Christ can be understood. Some of His sayings, we read, were hid from His hearers, some have been hidden till now ; some perhaps will be hidden for many an age to come. But perhaps the verse I have taken for my text can now be understood.

The progress of thought on religious subjects is very strange, it is not quite unlike the progress of thought on science. You know Agassiz's saying about the reception of a scientific truth. It passes through three stages, he tells us. First, it is said, it is not true ; second, it is contrary to religion ; third, everybody knew it before. It is almost exactly the case with the reception in their plain broad meaning of some of the most characteristic teachings of Christ.

Do I mean that some of Christ's teaching is said to be not true, or that it is said to be contrary to religion ? Yes, that is what I mean. Religion, as

¹ Preached in the Chapel of St. John's College, Cambridge, 28th October 1883.

we are brought up in it, is such a strange medley of human traditions and opinions superposed on Christ's teaching and selected from it, that there are parts of Christ's teaching which are absolutely in contrast and contradiction to it. And when these are brought forward some people are always ready to say, this is not true, this is not what Christ meant, this is contrary to our religion; by which they mean the little scheme of texts and traditions they have selected for themselves.

But meantime in a thousand ways the soil of the human mind is being prepared for the seed, and some day people turn round and say, Everybody knew this before; of course this is religion, of course this is Christ's teaching.

Now what has Christ said? "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." And not in this text only, but in many another. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," nor by His words only, but by the spirit of His whole teaching, and the example of His whole life. Rightly read, the spirit of our Lord's life is a protest against any other idea of religion. He came to reveal fresh light and truth, to throw light on the great problem of life; but so far as the externals of religion were concerned, He taught that not worship, not belief, but duty was the form, the expression which religion ought to assume. And His followers truly caught the spirit of His life and of His words. The astonished Jews of Jerusalem heard from St. Peter that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him; the no less astonished Greeks heard the same

truths from St. Paul ; and St. James has expressed the same truth still more pointedly to the Jews of the dispersion in saying that the pure *θρησκεία*, or expression of religion, is charity and purity, and that alone.

Christ dared to say a truth which the religious world of His day—the Scribes and Pharisees—were totally unprepared to receive, a truth which men still shrink from saying or accepting ; the truth that morality is religion. This He repeated in clear and uncompromising language. He that doeth righteousness is righteous. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord ; not those that are fervent in devotion, firm in conviction, not the passionate adherents of either the cultus or the dogma of our religion, but those who in every nation do the will of God. They enter the kingdom. This is Christ's answer to the question we constantly ask, What is religion ? Religion is to care much and care always for doing your duty.

I am not saying that Christ taught us nothing else. I am not saying that morality is revelation. He came as the great Revealer of God. He came to throw light on our present and our future, to give men guidance and hope ; He came as a Saviour and Redeemer, and as the Light of the World and Revealer of the Father. But I am saying that the sum and substance of His teaching as regards the *expression* of our feeling towards God whom He revealed, was that this expression, this *θρησκεία*, this religion, consisted in a keen sensibility and loyal obedience to God's will. Or, to express this in the plainest way, it is to care much and to care always for doing our duty.

Now, simple though this is, we often fail to grasp it. Young men especially are often occupied with

the accessories of religion, and lose sight of the central truth ; or, on the other hand, having lost sight of the central truth, and being so dissatisfied with the accessories, they avert their eyes and minds from the whole subject. It has become unreal and distasteful. Let me try to put the subject into right perspective once more. Perhaps, as I said at first, the time has come when these words of Christ can be understood.

Religion is to care much and care always for doing your duty ; and all other matters of religion are accessory to this. Can it be so? you ask. "I thought religion meant a life of devotion and prayer ; that it meant believing and knowing about a number of doctrines and articles and creeds ; that it meant caring much about forms of worship." Did you think so? If you did, it was because things have been put before you wrongly, or because you have misunderstood what you have been taught. If I venture to express the thoughts of some of you, they are perhaps somewhat as follows : "Religion seems to me to have no beginning and no ending ; a great deal of it is merely form and talk. I find that I cannot take much interest in prayer ; I seldom read the Bible, and when I do I get no good from it. I don't see that those who profess to be religious are much better than I am. I am obliged to conclude that I am not religious by nature, that I must content myself with leading as good a life as I can, and doing my plain duty, and let others find what pleasure they may in religion." I believe that this is what many young men think. Now I beg you to examine the thought in the light of Christ's teaching, and you will find that in the midst of much confusion

of ideas you are nearer the truth than you expected. He that doeth the will of My Father that is in heaven—he that doeth righteousness—is righteous. By their fruits ye shall know them. In modern phraseology, not the conventional or Scriptural language, the religious man is one who cares much and cares always for doing his duty. Let us not be afraid to say so as plainly and as uncompromisingly as Christ himself, even though Scribes and Pharisees still misunderstand us, and say that we blaspheme.

But if this is so, you say, what is all the rest that we associate with religion?

I reply that nothing that is called Christianity or religion is of value except in so far as it helps us to do our duty. All else that we count religion was, or is, to others, if not to ourselves, a help to doing our duty.

Let us look at some of these things.

We will take these chapel services. Now I cannot doubt that the service, the prayers, the psalms, the lessons, the sermon, seem, and actually are to some of you, almost, or let me say quite, unprofitable. But they are in their origin the method which men have devised to express and strengthen that mutual sympathy and that trust in God which helps them to do their duty. The psalms are the comfort and support of one generation after another. The prayers express the deepest longings of the saintliest of men for spiritual blessings. The hymns contain the joy, the aspirations, the emotions of the finest souls that have lived, sung to music that has stirred the souls of myriads of congregations. And so the service *is* to very many a real substantial help to doing duty. You come to service in this chapel certainly not because your involuntary presence is an

act that pleases God, but because your coming here is a help to doing your duty. You can of course make your coming here almost useless if you let attention always wander unchecked ; if you do not make some effort to use the services, you may almost neutralise and nullify them. Even then, however, the memory of them may not be without some value. But of this you may be sure, that your coming here is not religion. Religion consists in caring much and caring always for doing your duty. Coming to chapel is a *help* to religion.

Let us take another instance.

Is a belief in all the articles of the Creed essential to religion ? Can a man be religious, you may say, and not even believe in the divinity of Christ ? St. Peter answers that question for us : " In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Christ himself answers the question, " Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, not every one that acknowledges me as his master, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The Creed is not religion. But the Creed is one of the helps to religion. I do not say that every article in it is a help to you, or perhaps to any one here present. But I do say that every article in it has been a help to Christians of old, and is at this hour a help to myriads, and when I say a help, I mean a help to religion, that is to doing your duty, and it would be easy to go through the articles of the Creed and show you how. If you do not yet find the Creed a help, wait ; perhaps some of it could be at once a help if you would so use it ; perhaps it will all be so some day.

E

But surely, you may say, there must be something more in religion than caring much and always for doing your duty. Is it not a revelation of mysteries? Is not faith the acceptance of these mysteries? Yes. Christianity is a revelation, it throws a light on the great problem, What is man, whence, whither? that nothing else has done. But revelation is not religion. Revelation tells us of our relation to God. Religion is the expression of our emotions towards God; and the most acceptable expression is purity and charity; this St. James has taught us. In other words, religion—the expression of our conviction—consists in doing our duty. And to give us help in this was at least one chief aim and result of Christ's life. In His life there is a surpassing help to a life of duty. If by an effort of imagination we could blot out from the history of the world the life of Christ and its direct consequences, how completely would you blot out with it all the noblest lives and deeds and thoughts of men, which inspire us with a love of duty. No agency or influence in history, none at the present moment, is comparable to the belief in Him as a power to help men to care for doing their duty. It is impossible even to begin to enumerate what the best men, and the best women, do for Christ's sake, and would do for no other reason. His life, His love, His death, His resurrection have elevated all humanity. You cannot study and think of Him without being the better for it. The love and worship of Christ, however, are not religion; but they are the greatest help to religion that has ever been given to the world. Over and over again, when duty is weary, and temptations are strong, and the flesh is weak, the thought of Christ, and Christ in us, that we have in

us the capacity for divine life, which Christ has shown us, has saved us, and will save us from sin. This is the reason why we preach Christ.

Religion is caring much and caring always for doing your duty ; bring this thought into the foreground, and see everything else as it bears on this truth. It is plain, for example, that you must learn what your duty is ; and this is a large subject, that requires continuous thought. He does not do his duty who takes no pains to enlarge his conceptions of duty. At first they centre round the individual ; you must be pure, and true, and just, and kind ; and as your horizon widens, larger conceptions of duty come in ; duty to your friends, your college, your country. There is no suffering that you do not wish to alleviate ; no wrong you do not wish to remedy.

Ask yourself, if you wish to be honest, what do you care most for ? For success ? for enjoyment ? for ease ? Then success, or enjoyment, or ease are your religion, by whatever name you call yourself. Or if you care for nothing, then you have no religion at all.

But if you care for duty, and place that first, then you are beginning aright, and where Christ would have you begin. I might tell you of the increasing happiness of such a life, of the interests, the largeness, the ever-growing, ever-widening and deepening sympathies of such a life. And I might tell you, too, how those who so begin, with a life of duty alone, find themselves irresistibly drawn to the Highest Example of duty, how with faith unformulated they come at last as it were by magnetic attraction to Christ ; and they know that it is He who has been

leading them all the time by ways that they knew not.

But for this there is not time now. I will only ask you to remember this, that the sole expression of religion commanded in the New Testament—the *θρησκεία καθαρὰ*, the pure worship—is purity, charity, and unworldliness, *to live among men as brothers, in the sight of God as a Father.*¹

¹ I owe some suggestions in this sermon to a school address of A. Sidgwick.

V

SOCIAL PURITY¹

I VERY little thought this afternoon, when I was preaching of brotherhood in Great St. Mary's, that there would be such a comment on my text as there is present before me in this great meeting. For it is quite certain that the great majority of you have come here from that motive ; not seeking to get any particular good for yourselves, but to learn how you may cultivate and strengthen that spirit of brotherhood.

I am going to take as my text the card of the Purity Association, which those of you who are members of this Association know very well, and others can procure from the secretaries. The first object of this Cambridge University Association for Promotion of Purity of Life, is "*to maintain the principle that purity of life is of universal obligation, upon men and women alike.*" Now, that object is put down by men of the world as a chimæra ; they

¹ A meeting of University men was held in the hall of St. John's College on Sunday evening, 28th October 1883, to hear an address upon the above subject from the Rev. J. M. Wilson, Head Master of Clifton College, and late Fellow of the College. Professor Westcott occupied the chair. It is printed as reported.

say, "The passion of man is too strong to make this possible." This Society says it is possible, and pledges itself to do what it can to produce that result. Now, I think the best thing I can do at first is to put before you the grounds on which we contend that this result is possible. We cannot make it an end unless we have some faith that it can be accomplished. It is no use crying for the moon; and, if this were an unattainable end, we could not heartily go in for it. I intend, therefore, to put before you the grounds on which I firmly believe that, not perhaps in our time, but sooner or later, this principle will be universally acknowledged in all civilised nations. At present, you know very well, it is not so acknowledged. The social stigma that is put upon women who transgress the laws of purity is far severer than it is on men. That will not always be the case.

First, I would ask you to think how the whole progress from barbarism up to civilisation has been progressing in the direction of purity. Among savage nations the idea of purity is simply rudimentary. Amongst savages, the wife is "a thing that cooks," and very little more. But among all civilised peoples—throughout, at any rate, the higher and middle levels of the nation—the idea of purity of married life has fully penetrated. I am giving you the barest possible outlines of a historical sketch of this subject, in order to show you that the progress we pledge ourselves to bring about is part of a continuous progress that can be traced from barbarism upwards.

There is another subject to which I must allude. It is not a very pleasant one, but it ought to be

spoken of. Few, even of young scholars, know how deeply the ancient world was defiled with unnatural vices. We get only fragmentary information on this subject from the classics. We may recollect isolated passages from Juvenal, from Martial, from Lucian, but we scarcely realise—at least, I did not at your age—how deeply the whole ancient world was defiled with unnatural vice. Throughout all Greece, there was this deep defilement resting upon the nation. Some of you may remember the passage in Plato, in which he despairs completely of ever exterminating that vice from among men. He speaks of any attempt to get rid of these unnatural vices between man and man as being a “romantic aspiration.” He calls it an *ἐν μύθῳ εὐχή*. But now, as you are aware, they have been practically exterminated from Christian peoples. It would be too long to tell you the details, but it is demonstrable that through the first three centuries the early Christian teachers set themselves like a wall against that particular form of vice, and from the time of Constantine to the time of Justinian, you can trace the effects of Christian teaching in legislation,¹ until at last this vice was got rid of. This same vice still prevails in Turkey, and in that other great branch of the Aryan nation to which we of the West belong, in India. It is not exclusively a question of race, but in large measure a question of religion. Here, then, is the example of a great widespread national evil of which Plato despaired, which the Stoic philosophers did not venture to touch, and which Christianity has met and conquered.

There is another term in the progress which has

¹ See *Gesta Christi*, by C. L. Brace. Hodder and Stoughton.

to be briefly alluded to. Among some savage nations there is practically no law or custom forbidding either adultery or incest. They are but little above the level of animals. But purity has grown, and now adultery and incest are condemned by the public conscience of all civilised nations as well as by their laws.

If you now take the question of prostitution and trace its history in the same way, you will find that there has been a progress in the view taken of it if you trace it in the uncivilised and partially civilised and the non-Christian nations down to the present time. The condemnation and social stigma passed on one sex, on prostitute women, is a very different thing now in Christian countries to what it was in Greece ; and that is one effect, but a still imperfect effect, of Christianity. The social condemnation passed on men and women is unequal, and that is its defect ; but we do not wish to see it made lighter on women ; rather we wish to see it extended to men. And the condemnation, it must be remembered, of prostitute men is increasing in severity in Christian countries. What, therefore, we are asked to do here, and what this Purity Association is doing, is to increase the stringency of that condemnation of men. This is the principle which is stated in this card—this admirable card—which confines itself to principles and does not go into details. It tells us that our first object is to maintain the principle that purity of life is of universal obligation upon men and women alike. As I said, that is not universally acknowledged at present. But that is what we are to look forward to.

Now, how is that result to be obtained ? We can get a lesson on this point, the best lesson that I know of, admirably expressed, from the study of a passage

in Plato's Laws. In this same passage that I have been alluding to, in the 8th book of the Laws, he speaks of the hopelessness of getting rid of these unnatural vices. And yet one of the interlocutors suggests it may be done. "How?" asks the other. "By the same process that incest has been condemned." "And how is that?" "If a man has a sister or brother that is beautiful, his desires towards them are extinguished by one little word." "What is that little word?" "That they are unholy, hated of God, and most infamous. He has never heard them called anything else, no other term has been applied to them, and, therefore, he never desires that particular form of pleasure." "If now," he says, "throughout the state these unnatural vices were condemned, by the common voice of all men, in the same way as incest is condemned, it would be possible to exterminate them. The legislator knows, therefore, how he ought to proceed." Now, has not this passage given you exactly the object which a large body like this has pledged itself to carry out, and its method also? It has pledged itself, to use Plato's word, to a *καθιέρωσις τῆς φήμης*, a consecration of the evil reputation of this form of vice among men. This is the work we have to take up. This is the work these societies are doing. And that is why it is important that these societies should be large. There may be a limited number of actual workers in the society, of men who are devoting themselves to the furthering of certain legislative and preventive objects of the society; but the society ought to include all who hold with the first principle—that purity is of universal obligation upon men and women alike. All these are workers. And you can do much in your Uni-

versity here to carry out that end by not tolerating loose talk, not tolerating light ways of treating impurity in any form ; representing it always as a serious matter, a serious wrong-doing, and by never permitting yourself or others to jest upon it or to treat it lightly.

Now I wish you to see from what I have said that we have a winning cause, and not a losing one. We have with us the progress of past centuries, the progress of moral evolution, the progress of Christian opinion and of English opinion upon this subject. We have, in a word, God on our side. We have, therefore, this privilege and this duty of working together with God ; of working together with the highest aims we can conceive in advancing this cause of national purity, in making the public conscience go one step farther, in making compulsory on men the same degree of purity that we expect in women.

We will pass now to the second of these principles or ends stated on the card. It is—“*To unite men in actively opposing the corruption of national and social life that springs from the neglect of this principle.*” “In actively opposing.” And now you ask me, “What does that mean? What can *we* do towards actively opposing the corruption of national and social life that springs from the neglect of this principle of the equal obligation of purity on men and women?” This means more than keeping up a right tone in your Society here ; more than treating as infamous offences against the law of purity ; more than keeping yourself rigorously and strictly pure, and avoiding all forms of temptation, or anything that leads to this wrong. It is “*actively* opposing the corruption of national and social life.” I think

this Society means, and you mean, if I may endeavour to interpret to you your own meaning in coming here, that it is not too soon for the younger members of this University to learn something about this great national evil, and the ways of suppressing or diminishing it ; that it is not too soon for you to hear about legislation, about the carrying out of existing laws, or the amendment of the laws that deal with these subjects, whether parliamentary or municipal ; that it is not too soon for you to hear about the various Rescue and Preventive agencies that are at work throughout the country. That it is, in fact, a part of your political, religious, and social education here, to begin to take an interest in this great political, religious, and social question. You cannot at present do much—possibly you can do nothing—in the way of affecting legislation. But the time will come, and come very soon, to you all, when you will be drafted out to your various posts in the world—at the bar or in business, in orders, in posts infinitely various. And there is work to be done in every city, in every village, in *actively* opposing this corruption. I cannot now describe what that work may be ; for it will vary wherever you may happen to be. It may be simply forming round you young men's friendly societies, and endeavouring by personal influence and personal example to check anything that would lead them wrong. It may be your business to join in the formation of vigilance committees, formed by volunteers to co-operate with the municipal authorities of your town, for the purpose of repressing prostitution and the degradation of women and children. It would lead me very far if I were to talk now about the formation and the

functions of these repressive committees, but it is proper to say that throughout many of the cities, by a sort of thought-wave passing over the country, these volunteer committees are being formed, and the country is becoming more and more resolute in dealing with this great question of national degradation. You will be with the times. You will be heading or following a movement in the right direction, if you yourselves, when the time comes, learn about these things, and give these remedial and preventive agencies your assistance and hearty support. That is all I can say now upon this second end, "to unite men in actively opposing." You must do it here by joining and encouraging this Society, and afterwards by those various ways I have briefly—very briefly—alluded to.

The third of our ends or principles is "*to make men realise the degradation and wrong which the self-indulgence of men inflicts upon women.*" And that is a subject I feel it almost impossible to speak upon, because young men do not know, and cannot know, all that is implied in that third principle. The wrong to women, inflicted by the selfishness and vice of men, is so great, that it is almost impossible for young men to realise what it is. They may see those poor creatures in the streets laughing and looking merry. There never was a ghastlier saying than that which describes theirs as "a short life and a merry one." It is the most miserable of all possible lives. If it were possible to paint to you the real life of one of these poor creatures, you would be overpowered with compassion. Think of some pure English girl, led away by one of those paid agents who make a trade—a regular slave

trade—of English girls ; and sell them—I am speaking the plain truth—sell them from a village to a town, and from one town to another, until they become the property of some brothel-keeper ; think of her let out for hire, unable to escape, having not a penny she can call her own, belonging body and soul to this wretch who keeps her, until at last she is rejected and turned out into the streets to die. It is the most miserable and awful of lives that can be imagined. And that is going on in Christian England. If men could realise the degradation and wrong which the self-indulgence of man inflicts upon women ! It would do some “men of the world,” as they call themselves, good to go round a Lock Hospital, and see the misery, the soulless faces, the despair written in every countenance. It would cure such a one, for a time at least, of any wrong desires.

Now, it is possible that there may be some one of this large number who are listening to me, there may be some one here who is fired with a noble but unformed ambition. You heard last Sunday in the University Church, from the Bishop of Durham, about ambition. I will tell you what one noble ambition would be. You have read about Howard, Wilberforce, or Lord Shaftesbury devoting themselves to the prisoners, to the slaves, to the ill-used factory children, and you know what fame and what true greatness those men won. If one of you is fired with the same splendid ambition to do a great work before he dies, let him take up the cause of these English girls. He must count the cost. He must not go with ten thousand against those who come against him with twenty thousand. It will be the career of a lifetime of patient work, trusting in

God, working on against all sorts of abuses, all sorts of difficulties. He must have the fire of an apostle, and the doggedness of a bloodhound, to hunt out these men and make their trade impossible. But he will find life interesting—so interesting, that when he comes to the end of it he would wish to have it all over again, that he might go on with such work. There is no more splendid career in England than saving these English girl-slaves; and to such a one, if such a one there is listening to me, I will quote the words which the great John Wesley used in the last letter he ever wrote—a letter to the young and ardent Wilberforce—who was himself, you may remember, a member of this College a hundred years ago,—when he had just undertaken the cause of the slaves. He wrote to him, if I rightly recollect the words, “Unless God has reared you up to be an ‘Athanasius contra mundum’ I do not see how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. You will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils, but God is with you, and who can be against you? Are all of them stronger than God?” And so I would say to any one of you who may in future years be brave enough to undertake this splendid work for this country.

But if you do undertake it you will find England is getting ready for it. There are movements in the great cities of a very remarkable kind, showing that England is prepared for further legislative movement in this matter. Legislation always follows public opinion in England, and does not lead it, and public opinion is being raised and matured upon this ques-

tion, and will soon communicate itself to legislation. Look first at that movement in the north, which owes so much of its power to our great Bishop of Durham, the "White Cross Army." That is an extremely remarkable phenomenon. Some of you here may not know what that "White Cross Army" is. It is a society of thousands of artisans, young men, pledging themselves—pledging themselves more than you are doing by taking this card—pledging themselves to purity and the advancement and protection of purity. What does this mean? It means that in the north of England—and what the north of England says to-day the south will say to-morrow—it means that in the north of England the artisan classes are taking up this question, and they mean to protect their own class from wrong. That is one meaning of the "White Cross Army." Those hard-headed pitmen of the north, those artisans of Yorkshire and Durham, have got a clearer perception than some of us have of what liberty is. I do not know what answer some of you would make if I asked you to define liberty. You would perhaps say it means "Let a man do whatever he chooses." That is not the notion of liberty springing up amongst the intelligent and advanced artisan classes of the north. They mean by liberty—equal power possessed by all classes of England to impose restraints on all for the good of all. They see that liberty has its duties as well as its rights. That is the great doctrine which is penetrating the artisan classes of England. Now, if you apply this doctrine of liberty to this particular question, you will see that it means equality between the sexes in this matter of protection of purity. It means there will be, finally, pressure put upon our

legislature, and a demand that prostitute men should be dealt with on the same principle as prostitute women. It may be far off, but it will come. That is one of the signs of our times.

Another remarkable phenomenon is that the Church is taking the matter up. It is not many years ago since Church people were excessively shy in touching upon questions of this kind. Such an address as I am giving in this hall could not, I believe, have been given twenty-five years ago. Church people are taking this subject up in congresses and conferences as part of their religious work; and not only are Church people doing this, but other Christian bodies in England are doing the same. And when you are having co-operation between the great religious forces of England, and the great social forces too; when the town councils, the clergy, and the nonconformist ministers are meeting, as I know that in more than one city they are meeting, to consider this very question, then you may be sure some progress is coming.

I know, of course, how "men of the world," as they call themselves, treat this matter. Perhaps there is one here. He says, "All the other vices can be dealt with, but not this, because this is natural; the others that you have spoken of are not natural." What are we to say to that argument? The answer to that is, that when you talk about nature, man's nature, you must take the whole of his nature, and not half only. It *is* natural. One half of a man's nature does lead him to this wrong-doing. But there is another half of his nature, as he knows very well, which prohibits this sin, and leads him away from it. I was talking to a man of this stamp not

very long ago, and he admitted that prostitution was what he called "a confounded shâme." That was an admission upon his part, and I made him see it was an admission that he had a conscience and higher nature which protested against licentiousness just as much as his body tempted him to it. If we talk about human nature, let us talk about the whole of human nature ; about the higher part of it as well as the lower ; about that which unites him to God as well as that which unites him to the beast. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." That text is, you know, usually read in a different connection. To me it means just now, Give not up your highest nature to the dogs ; cast not the pearls of your own purity before the swine of your own bodily lusts. That is what that passage may mean to us all.

If you have these three principles I have submitted to you, you are armed against temptation to a very great degree. If you have a passion for equal purity in men and women ; if you are impressed with the terrible wrongs of women ; if you really desire, for the good of your nation and your country, to check the social degradation springing from these evils, you are in an atmosphere which secures you at once from temptation. In such a frame of spirit you can take up serpents, or any deadly thing, and they shall not harm you. The man armed with this passion for purity is, like Una among the lions, preserved by his own glowing innocence. It is, therefore, possible to deal with subjects of this kind and literally not feel the temptation or the stain which, if you approach them in any other state of mind, might be dangerous. However, you are bound to avoid

temptation. Very much is done—I do not think we appreciate how much more could be done—by diminishing the temptations to which men and women are exposed. It is constantly said, “You cannot make a man moral by Act of Parliament.” No, you cannot ; but you can do the next best thing—you can often prevent him from becoming immoral. Let me give one proof of that. A hundred years ago gambling was common in all ranks—most of all in the upper ranks—of society. Gambling-houses met you in London in every corner, and men played high. Everybody knew where they could find a gaming-table, as well as they know now where they can get a glass of beer. But public gambling-houses have been stopped ; and what is the result ? That, although not absolutely annihilated—for I suppose they still exist—yet a man has to look for them. You might live in London or a provincial town for many years, and literally not know where you could go of an evening to lose a £5 note if you wished. Many a young man, therefore, has been saved from that form of temptation ; he has been so far made moral by Act of Parliament. It is a great gain to young men, therefore, to remove temptation from them ; and that is one of the things that must be done by future legislation. This may be done, and should be done, in University towns above all others. There is a need, perhaps, in Cambridge, of such a volunteer vigilance committee, to co-operate with the proctors and municipal authorities in clearing the streets of the town.

Now, let me say one word more. What are the motives which keep men to such work as this ? There is much hard work to be done ; and we shall

not carry this work through without some strong impelling motive, and these motives are put on this excellent card in the shortest and most telling manner. "Members one of another," "Walk as children of light." That is the best comment on my sermon of this afternoon. "Members one of another" is but an appeal to our *brotherhood* in Christ. We have our own brotherhood, stimulated by our home and school education, our College life, our University life ; and if we can but generalise it, and make our sense of brotherhood grow until it includes all our countrymen and countrywomen, impurity would be impossible.

There is a story in Plutarch which I hope you will remember. He tells the story, in one of his moral essays, of a young man at the public games seeing a very beautiful girl, and becoming inflamed with desire and passion to possess her. He manages to meet her, and then he suddenly discovers that the beautiful girl is his own sister, and immediately the passion leaves him. How is it extinguished ? It is extinguished, as Plato would tell us, by that *σμικρὸν ῥῆμα*, that little word ; that it is *ἀνόσιον, αἰσχρὸν αἰσχιστον*, unholy, most infamous. If we can but regard all women as our sisters, any unholy desires are extinguished by that thought, and by the *σμικρὸν ῥῆμα*, the word "sister."

But it is not, remember, the mere feeling of human brotherhood and sisterhood that we have to rely upon. I feel more strongly than I can possibly express to you that it is a spiritual union, and not merely the having a common parentage which has any moral effect upon us ; and that spiritual union, as I have been trying to express this afternoon, is dependent in some unspeakable way on our common

relation to Christ. This leads us into difficult subjects of thought, into which I do not mean to enter at this late period of the evening. But we must and do believe that just as there is a common physical tie which connects us in one brotherhood, so there is some close spiritual tie and union in that great Spiritual Being, who is the Guide of our wills and the Father of our spirits, and whose chief manifestation in this world was in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is from Him, and our relation to Him, that flows this great power that will transform the world of human nature. It is our union in Him that is to the thoughtful and religious man the strong impulse to purity that nothing can suppress. It is impossible for me now to speak at length of this ; I cannot convey to you a tenth part of my own earnestness in feeling that there, and there alone—in no mere feeling of human brotherhood or love for an abstract humanity—but that in Christ is the great fountain of all our spiritual life, that He is the goal to which we all tend, as He is the Fount of Life from which we all flow ; and that it is in our brotherhood to Him that there is to be found the strongest and the most enduring motive for purity.

And now I will only say to you one brief word more. I do appeal to you to strengthen one another in this University association, by strong hopefulness that you are on the winning side, on God's side, and by the strong conviction that you can in the long run—not at once, but in the long run—produce a sensible effect on your University and on society at large. Stand true to these colours wherever you may be. And you who are just beginning your University career, in your first enthusiasm for all that is pure

and true and noble, and of good report, can you—I put it to you—can you do a better thing than take up your line in this matter, and make it your life-long work to contribute to the good of your University and of your country, by supporting earnestly in your life and in your conduct the principles on this card ; and endeavouring more and more earnestly to base those principles upon the two motives expressed on this card, “members one of another,” and “walking as children of light” ; in other words, upon the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God ? For remember that “God is Light.” Children of light are the children of God. And so I appeal to you by all you hold dearest to you, by the love of mother and sister, and by the dearer love that will, I trust, come one day to you all—the love of wedded wife—to keep yourself unstained, by God’s help, from every form of impurity, and to pledge yourselves to defend the weak and to avenge the wronged, through your life long. Be strong and of a good courage, and may God be with you.

VI

OPINION AND SERVICE¹

“Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded ?”—I KINGS viii. 27.

EVERY one will recall the scene. Solomon, the master-mind stored with all the learning of the day, was dedicating the Temple to God. He was speaking to a nation naturally given to idolatry and to the localisation of worship ; to a nation exclusive in their religion, and almost incurable in their low semi-materialistic views of God—speaking, too, at the moment of dedicating their most magnificent Temple to their national God ; and yet he rises far above, nay, he cuts clean across, their national prejudices, and in these sublime words reveals to them that which through his science God had taught him—that God is infinite, not to be comprehended in temple or shrine. It was a stage in the revelation of God, given to the world through Solomon, the great student of His works,—a further revelation of the immensity, the inconceivability of God, “The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded ?” What a hush, as in the presence of the unveiled majesty of God, must have

¹ Preached in Westminster Abbey 9th March 1884.

fallen on that vast assembly. They were raised for an instant out of themselves.

And yet Solomon dedicated the Temple, to become the centre of the passionate religious fervour of the nation, to be deemed for a thousand years the most sacred spot in all the earth. Solomon, the philosopher, with philosophic truth on his lips, consecrates a local habitation and worship for Jehovah the God of Israel; and the people, with all their strong prejudices and narrow views, accept him as their fellow-worshipper—even as their spokesman, their representative before God. How shall we regard this? Was it in Solomon a hypocritical condescension to popular superstition, and in the people an unconscious or forced inconsistency? Or was it not rather in both a flash, an anticipation, of the great truth that every form of worship is inadequate, and even misleading, until we see its inadequacy?

And, now, what is all this to us? We have learned the lesson Solomon taught; we all know that God does not dwell in material temples. Yes, that is true. And now we have a harder lesson to learn, and all depends on the spirit in which we learn it. God has flashed on us also, on all our generation, a further revelation of Himself; not, indeed, by the voice of one individual, but by the irresistible, accumulated conscience and wisdom of the ages, which is as surely the voice of God as that which ever spoke by Hebrew prophet. With this voice he is again proclaiming in our ears, that "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him; how much less this house that man has builded?" But the house that man has builded is now no temple of stone or marble; it is the systems of philosophical

and metaphysical theologies in which men have expressed their theories about God and the relations of God to man. It is the inadequacy of these that God has revealed to us in a thousand ways ; and now that it is so revealed, it is only by the full and frank recognition of their inadequacy that we can avoid being misled by them. Here is a splendid truth already fully revealed to us, and now I ask in what spirit are we welcoming it ; are we indeed welcoming it at all ? God's revelation to men is unintelligible until we see that it was and is progressive. It was necessary for Israel in Solomon's day, and necessary for many a long year, that there should be a temple while the deeper truth was germinating in the hearts of men. It is no less necessary for us to have a theology, to co-ordinate our thoughts, to help to teach the elements of truth, and to give them strength and cohesion. Both alike were stages in that human groping after God, that divine education of man, ever going on, which, looked at from its divine side, is progressive revelation, and from its human side, is progressive discovery.

But such systems, whether of stone or of dogma, are by their nature temporary ; their foundations are as eternal as the rock upon which the Temple stood ; their superstructure as transitory as that of the Temple of which our Lord said there should not be left one stone upon another which should not be thrown down. They are temporary ; and when once this is made known to us, it is only by the full recognition that they are temporary that we can use them without hypocrisy and without inconsistency. It is only when we recognise their inadequacy that they cease to be misleading.

It is always a hard lesson, always a painful lesson. So too was the lesson Solomon taught the Jews. That lesson was learned at last in tears and blood and agonies. The Temple, built on a hill consecrated by far-reaching memories, with tenderest and divinest associations clustered round it, fell amid shrieks and execrations, to teach the world that not in Jerusalem only should men worship the Father. But it is no less true that however sacred and ancient and endeared by myriad memories are the forms of thought in which the inspired Church of God has expressed the revelation of His Holy Spirit, yet these forms are not the truth final, not the truth absolute ; and these too will fall, and fall amid agonies and grief, unless we accept God's revelation to us and welcome the broadening light of day ; they will fall unless we learn in time that "the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house which man has builded ?"

Hard and painful the lesson is, but the Church must learn it or perish. That is the characteristic of all God's lessons. It is vain to oppose the obstacles of human bonds and fetters to the vast and Divine expansive forces of the growth of the human mind and soul—

"He fights a losing fight who fights mankind."

The Jews could not learn, and they were ploughed up by the Romans ; we Christians must learn the lesson of God's teaching, or our churches may be shattered into fragments, and after an age of wild unrest a more spiritual and Christ-like Church rise out of the chaos.

And now let us ask ourselves more precisely what

is the lesson that He has taught us, though we have scarcely yet understood and formulated it. It seems to be this: that all opinions about God, all systems of theology, are provisional, temporary, educational, even as the Temple was provisional, temporary, educational. They are not of the essence of truth. We know that this is so, but we shrink from the difficulty of reconciling this dawning revelation of the subordinate final position of opinion and theology with those previous revelations of God which appear so largely to consist of opinion and theology. Not less, we may be sure, was the difficulty of the Jews in reconciling the dawning revelation of the universality of God's kingdom with their own localised worship,—such difficulties are inherent in growth; but we shall gain nothing by ignoring facts. It is the deepest conviction, not of philosophers only, but of the pious congregations of our land also, that the harmony and co-operation and brotherhood of Christians is the will of God concerning us, and that it is not to be sought for in unity of opinion, and can never be obtained as long as opinion is held to be of primary importance in religion. It is to be sought for in some far deeper unity of faith in Christ and of service for Him. This conviction is clear, even if unexpressed, in the minds of myriads of God's servants, and the voices which it finds here and there are surely heralds of the coming transformation of Christianity. Painful though the lesson be, it is a matter of necessity for us to learn it.

Do we all realise the present aspect of Christendom? There is the great monumental Roman Catholic Church which looks serenely at all contests of opinion, and repeats her assurances that she, and

she alone, has authority to declare the truth. In her presence opinions are hushed, and the life of religion languishes ; in all the Protestant nations opinion is supreme, and opinion is infinitely divided. Religion lives, but lives a distracted and wounded life. There is rivalry and jealousy, and division and unbelief, and all the curses that come from party spirit, that besetting sin of Christians. Meantime, Christian faith, which is the very light of the world, has terrible foes to meet outside her own pale—the social degradation of the lowest class on the one hand, and the alienation and distrust and the vices of the higher classes on the other—and we are paralysed by our divisions. Matters of opinion are made matters of principle and religion ; they separate church from sect, they separate one sect from another, and they split our own Church into parties that are as hostile as foes. We make it a matter of conscience that it should be so ; we make our opinions our god, and straightway fall down and worship the creatures we have fashioned. And so all, except the most ignorant and the most opinionated, lose confidence in their cause, and we lose the immense force that would come from united action and brotherly sympathy in high aims, and we lose the vast increase that would accrue to the ranks of Christians, if only our opinions ceased to separate us, and we allowed our practice to unite us.

The present is not an ideal state of Christendom. Then it is our duty to attempt to alter it. But is it of any use to wring our hands over divisions of opinion ? None whatever. But this is of use—to declare that variety of opinion is part of the many-sided teaching of God, that it is man's homage to

truth, that it is the rightful outcome of reason and liberty ; and to declare in the same breath that opinion is not of the essence of worship and religion at all, that it is provisional, temporary, educational, and that it must not be allowed to bar our co-operation in the practical aims of our Christian faith. It is of use to declare that opinions resolutely attacked, resolutely defended, have been the curse of Christendom and almost of mankind.

I am reminded of a passage in Selden's *Table-Talk*. "It was a good fancy of an old Platonic," he says. "The gods, which are above men, had something whereof men did partake—as intellect and knowledge. And the gods kept on their course quietly. The beasts, which are below men, had something whereof men did partake—as sense and growth. And the beasts lived quietly in their way. But man had something in him whereof neither gods nor beasts did partake, which gave him all the trouble and made all the confusion in the world, and that is opinion."

I am not saying that variety of opinion is an evil ; what I am saying is an evil is to make opinion an essential part of religion ; it is no more essential than was the Temple to the worship of God ; it is provisional, temporary. In the ideal Christianity which Christ taught, and which we who try to preach Christ ought also to teach, opinion is nothing, and purity of life and charity and the love of God are everything. It is not the correct in opinion, it is "the pure in heart," "the merciful," those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," that "shall see God" ; and if these are the qualities that admit to the Church in Heaven, these, and none other than these,

should constitute membership of the final and ideal Church on earth. This is the truth of which our generation is getting more than a glimpse. "When a Church," said Abraham Lincoln, "inscribes on its portals the two great commandments of the law and the gospel, and makes obedience to them the test of membership, to that Church will I belong." You say that that is an ideal Church ; it may be an ideal, but it is an ideal which we ought always to keep in view, and with reference to which we must mould our practice. What are we to preach except ideals ?

How far are we from the liberal catholic spirit of St. Paul ! How are we enslaved by the traditions of men ! What would he say now who said formerly, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing" ? How would he heap kindly compassion with a touch of scorn on us !—"O foolish Englishmen ! who hath bewitched you, that ye are so far departed from the spirit that was in Christ ? Are ye not carnal, and walk as men ?" And if we are far from St. Paul, how much farther are we from Christ ? How little was there of opinion in the religion that He lived and taught ! His life was spent in setting men free from the yoke of traditions and ordinances, and they have again enslaved themselves to the tyrant—Opinion. If, then, we would rediscover and return to the Christianity of Christ, if we would use our reason and our responsibility, and yet not involve ourselves in all the evils of schism and sectarianism, there is but one way ; it is not merely toleration, it is the absolute subordination of opinion as a valueless thing, except for its fruits, and the consequent resolute co-operation with other men, whatever their opinions may be, in those common works of Christian service

which ought to make so large a part of the life and very nature of the servants of Christ.

Even as humble individuals we may do very much. We may efface needless barriers, we may discountenance all party associations and watchful jealousies, we may fix our thoughts on Christ and on His service on earth. Believe me, it is by humble Christian life, by the life of such as you and me, and not by Church authority, that great errors are corrected and great transformations effected. As I write this I recall the striking words used by our archbishop in speaking of a council in the time of Cyprian. "The unanimity," he says, "of such early councils and their erroneous-ness are a remarkable monition. The conclusion reached by a large and representative assembly, uncharitable, unscriptural, uncatholic, unanimous: the consolation as strange as the disappointment; the mischief silently and perfectly healed by the simple working of Christian society: life corrected the error of thought." Let us not fear even a unanimity which is uncharitable, and unscriptural, and uncatholic, which makes religion consist in opinion; life will correct the error of thought.

We may be sure that, with churches, or parties, or sects, as with individual men, self-sacrifice is the law of greatness and of life. "He that loses his life for My sake, the same shall find it." The note of exclusiveness is not the note of the eternal and ideal Church of Christ; it is the note of the transient sectarianism, orthodox or unorthodox, of men.

It is difficult to handle, however briefly, in one sermon so vast a subject. If you would see it at length, handled by a master, read Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying*. But I should be wrong if I

failed to add two further reflections on this gradual subordination of doctrine to practice which we are now witnessing. One is that the profound analogy between the growth of religion in an individual and in the world gives us an additional confidence that the transformation of Christianity now going on is really of the nature described,—a subordination of opinion to service. When we were young we were opinionated and positive; but when years come, except where development is arrested, they bring tolerance, and a larger, diviner wisdom. "It is the mark of boys," says Aristotle, "to know everything and to affirm positively. Men put in a 'perchance,' or an 'it may be so.'" And when we come to our death-beds, then what shall we rest on? Not on opinions about Christ and His Church, but on Christ Himself. The growth of the religious idea in the world passes through the same stage. The Church of our death-beds is the Church of the future.

The other reflection is that the most complete subordination of opinion to practice does not involve any revolution in the method of teaching. We must teach on the old lines. Doctrine is necessarily the form in which elementary truth is conveyed to the young and to the uneducated, and the form by which it is retained by the old. All experience of mission work, of parish work, of educational work, proves that teaching must take this form; it is as necessary as are ordinances and churches. The power and providence and Fatherhood of God; His Divine purpose in all creation; the Divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, the goal to whom all creation tends; His redemption of all men from the burden of sin; the brotherhood of men; the hope of

immortality ; the indwelling of the Spirit of God—these and such as these must ever be the food of the Christian ; these we must study and teach, not less but more ; but the temper in which we study and teach them will be altered when we fully recognise that all our formulas are but approximations and symbols, mere stepping-stones to the infinite truths that they indicate but cannot define. We shall teach them with modesty and tenderness, not with vain intrusion into things which we have not seen ; we shall respect the thought, the divinely-illuminated mind, of others, as we respect our own ; and where the fruit of the Spirit is, there we shall not ask whether or not it came through our formulas ; for as we know not whence it cometh, so we know not whither it goeth.

My friends, the very walls of this Abbey cry out to us, and tell us that we stand this day between the dead and the living, the heirs of the past, the trustees of the future—one generation only in that long series of which we can see neither the beginning nor the end—one generation only, but the only living generation, in whom alone is deposited, for the time, the living voice of the revelation of God : “The living, the living, they shall praise Thee.” Let us then, each in our own little circle, try to assist in this glorious transformation of Christianity by the steady subordination of opinion to the practical service of Christ : Whoever tries to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, he is a member of my Church and I of his. Is this disloyalty to my Church ? It was Lacordaire, the staunchest member of the Roman Catholic Church, who said, “Where there is the love of God there is Jesus Christ ; and where Jesus Christ is there is the

Church with Him." You need not fear to be disloyal to your Church, if you are loyal to that Ideal.

We are all members of Christ ; all hold office under Christ ; all are consecrated to that universal priesthood of believers. And what is that office ? It is to minister to His body—the Church ; it is to do something for His body—the nominally Christian England, for that is the Church of England. "What have ye done for Me?" will be the question that will fall on our ears at last ;—not "What did ye think about Me, and My ministers, and My Church, and My sacraments, and My Word?" but "What have ye done for Me: done, even though ye knew not that it was done for Me? 'For inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.'"

We all have the same noble dream of what our religion ought to be—the health-bringing life-blood of the whole nation, circulating through all parts of our great social organism, bringing purity, justice, redemption from evil, and that love that springs from a community of joy. Let us try to make that dream a reality. Hasten the time, O Lord Jesus! hasten the time, ye servants of His that try to do His pleasure!

VII

RELIGION AND REVELATION¹

“And they took Paul, and brought him unto Areopagus.”
ACTS xvii. 19.

THIS scene suggests a comparison of Christianity with the old world religions. It might be the text for a sermon on comparative religion. But I do not intend to preach such a sermon, but rather to invite your attention to this phrase “comparative religion,” with which most of us are very familiar, and to explain its meaning. It is a somewhat modern phrase, and it has begun to exercise great influence over the thought of our time. Books are written on “the great religions of the world”; Christianity being of course mentioned as one of them. And though in such books it is always pointed out that Christianity is the highest and the purest, yet the mere fact of classifying Christianity with other religions leaves inevitably the impression that Christianity is like the others, a local, temporary religion; a mere passing stage in the evolution of the religious faculty of man. It is, therefore, an extremely important phrase, and conception, and one that is worth thoroughly examining.

¹ Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday evening, 23d March 1884.

What is religion? I will not give you the various definitions that have been given of religion by philosophers, because their definitions concern its idea rather than its expression; and therefore do not throw much light on those elements of religion which enter into its comparative study. But the *expression* of religion may be defined as consisting of a cultus and a dogma. And hence comparative religion, which deals with the *expression*, consists in tracing the history and development of cultus and dogma in the different ages and races of the world: it is the history of forms of worship, and of speculative opinions on the relations of man to unseen powers. That is the sphere of comparative religion; and in this historical survey Christianity, in so far as it consists of a cultus and a dogma, must of course be included.

In so far as it consists of a cultus and a dogma.

But the important question is whether this would not be a very superficial view of Christianity; whether indeed the historical development of Christianity in cultus and dogma does not conceal more than it reveals of the true nature of the work of Christ; whether in fact cultus and dogma, with which alone comparative religion deals, are not the accidents, and something else the essence of Christianity. The fact is that, unless we watch our thoughts very closely, we are apt to ignore a most fundamental characteristic of Christianity; and the phrase "comparative religion" has tended, along with other causes, to obscure this characteristic.

Christianity is essentially a revelation, not a religion; and the difference is enormous. Religion, to use the word in its more precise and limited sense,—religion, *θρησκεία*, that is cultus and dogma,

is the expression of a universal human instinct. Revelation is some transmuting, transforming influence in man or on man, which is usually antagonistic to this instinct. Religion is a subject of history; cultus and dogma are born and grow and perish. Revelation is spiritual, accumulative, imperishable.

This was one of the truths of which the world caught a glimpse at the Reformation; and now a far clearer view is opening on this generation. We have to disentangle our thoughts on this contrast of religion and revelation before we can rightly understand the limited sphere of comparative religion; endless confusions cluster round these two words. We cannot of course alter or limit the meaning which popular usage assigns to the word religion; but we can remember that it is ambiguous; and that in the phrase "comparative religion" the word has a precise and limited meaning.

The origin of religion, in this precise and limited sense, is to be sought for deep in the instincts and circumstances of human nature: all races, savage and civilised, show these instincts. Much has been made, and truly made, of the witness they bear to the spiritual powers of the world. But we are still more familiar in history with other manifestations of these powerful instincts; in fear and superstition; in fatalism, in cruelty; in lust, in persecution; in priest-craft, and in hostility to all science and light. The history of "religion" is a dark and terrible history. We instinctively remember how Lucretius speaks of religion as

"Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,"

and that other line that can never be forgotten,

"Tantum relligio potuit suadere malorum."

We recall terrible scenes in the history of nation after nation.

But with the lower instinct of religion some force, some illumination, has plainly ever been contending. This force, this illumination, is revelation.

It may throw a fresh light on the study of the Bible, if you look at it with this thought of the contrast and contest between religion and revelation. The Old Testament is not chiefly a record of the divine origin and establishment and sanctions of a religion. To represent it as this is to lose sight of its most instructive aspect. The Jewish nation, when they first appear in the dawn of history, already were possessed of strong religious traditions and instincts, inherited from their less enlightened far-off ancestors, and modified by the peoples with whom they had been brought in contact. Ritual and sacrifice and traditional beliefs were not unfamiliar to them. Some of these traditions were by no means of a high order. Through their long history, so far as it is known, from Moses to Ezra, may be traced the two contending forces: one, the religious instinct, which was always turning them to externals; sometimes taking the form of idolatry and polytheistic nature-worship, at other times that of an unspiritual temple-worship: the other, the antagonistic voice, that ceaselessly strove with man; that spoke in Moses, and made the two great commandments of the law—love to God and man—stand out above all else: that spoke in Samuel, and taught the nations that “to obey was better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”; that spoke in David, and in the prophets, again and again, in words too familiar to need quotation; and so made,

as Matthew Arnold has expressed it, the word righteousness the keynote of the Old Testament. Finally, we see this voice almost silenced in the age of Ezra. It was the age of the revival of "religion," and simultaneously the prophetic voices died out. The voice of the priest was embodied in ritual; the voice of the prophet was hushed; and the nation committed itself finally to religious conservatism. Then the Old Testament closes.

You will understand then what is meant by saying that the Old Testament is not a record of a religion; it must be studied as the record of a contest between the unenlightened religious instincts of the Jews, and what for the present we may call the revelation of God, made through the hearts and voices of man. Here lies the unending value of the book; and the record terminates when the contest terminated, when religion was stereotyped and revelation was hushed. The natural growth of thought and revelation was strangled by the grasp of "religion."

Then after four centuries, not indeed of blank, but of quiet preparation in many forms, in the fulness of time, Christ came. And what did He come to do? To found a new "religion"?—the Christian religion? Surely not. He came to renew and continue the long-lost revelation: He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. He came as one of the prophets, though far greater than any prophet. And He came as the great Revealer of God. We Christians think Him to have been the Unique Revealer of God. And so the contest was renewed once more—renewed more cruelly than ever. He was treated as a blasphemer, and was put to death

by the "religionists" of his day ; as they treated the prophets, killing some and stoning some, so at the last they treated Him. It is the consummation of the contest between religion and revelation. That contest has been seen, and will be seen in other lands, in other ages ; but the cry, "Crucify Him ! crucify Him !" is the climax and acme of the ceaseless contest between the lower religious instincts of the human race and the higher divine light that pours on men, even though they know it not, from the unseen spiritual power of the world, from God. Christ was in no sense the founder of a new religion (in the limited sense), of a new cultus and dogma. His whole life rightly read is a force contending against the predominance of "religion." He abolished ritual of time and place ; He broke down all barriers of race and caste and calling ; simple as was the dogma of the Jews He introduced no new dogma ; He brought them straight into God's presence, and that quickened all their spiritual instincts and life. Obedience to the will of God, purity, gentleness, sympathy with all, with the sinful and the suffering ; the heart open to receive the truth and light and love of God ; these, and such as these, were the lessons taught by His life. They consummated and sanctioned the purest teaching of the prophets. This was His "religion." But He was more than this. He was a revealer of God in the only way in which we can imagine God to be revealed. His revelation was Himself ; a man in close and vital union with God. He came as light into the world, to guide and purify the thoughts of men about God. This is plainly the teaching to be gathered from the Gospels as a whole ; and is the key to His life and words ;

and this is wholly unconnected with any idea of establishing a new "religion."

So, too, when we read the Gospels it is plain that the writers had not formed any idea that they were founding what we commonly mean by the Christian "religion." Their simple memoirs were not written with the thought of their becoming the text-book of a new "religion." It is as a revelation, embodied in life and facts, and conversation, and anecdote, and prayer, and parable, and discourse, not as a cultus and a dogma, not as a finished ritual or a speculative creed, that the work of Christ presents itself to the writers of the Gospels.

And again, it was not as a "religion," it was as a revelation that it was preached. The extreme simplicity of the earliest creed, "the word of faith which we preach," as St. Paul calls it, has often been remarked on. The only rubric on ritual in the New Testament is equally simple. "Let all things be done decently and in order." It was certainly not in creed or ritual that Christianity found its power at first: it was in the dissolution of creed and ritual, and in the revelation of new light on the mysteries of the life of man. New hopes, new bonds, new purposes, new consolations, a new ideal of life, arising from the revelation of God in Christ, and the resurrection of Christ from the dead. "Jesus and the resurrection," and the new light that shone from these facts,—these were the subjects of the early Apostolic preaching.

And once more, the Jews would not hear. They were religionists, and they closed their eyes to the revelation God was making them, because it came in a form they did not expect. They preferred, as Kant has said, the service of religion to the service

of God. "The light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

And thus the revelation of God in Christ was preached to nations that had gone through very different disciplines ; and the seed fell on very different soils. But one experience that it met with was universal : it found everywhere the religious instinct developed. Even the Athenians, who had little enough of cultus and dogma, were found by St. Paul to be somewhat too "religious." And therefore everywhere the old contest was renewed between revelation and religion ; the records of ecclesiastical history are the records of the contest between the higher light and the lower instinct in the post-Christian centuries, just as the Old Testament is the record of a similar contest in the præ-Christian centuries. In that contest the higher voice has never been wanting. Voices have always been found to proclaim that God prefers mercy to sacrifice, even though men knew not, and still "know not, what that meaneth." Rays of Christ's light have always penetrated the darkness and made it visible ; they show at this moment how dark our age is. "The light still shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." For the religious instinct is strong ; it is deep in human nature, and at times it would seem as if it had smothered the revelation of Christ.

Thus it comes to pass that what appears on the face of history as the Christian religion—namely, its cultus and dogma, some of its external manifestations, its ecclesiasticism, most of what we popularly mean by Church systems—is, in great measure, the expression of the old hereditary religious instincts of man,

agglomerated from many sources, from East and West, from Teuton and Latin, partially and only partially transformed and illumined by the revelation of God in Christ, and is not the revelation itself. It is the dough which the leaven is transmuting, rather than the leaven, the transmuting force.

Now then you may begin to see in what sense Christianity may be introduced in a work on comparative religion ; and in what sense it may not : and you may derive full advantage from the study. Nothing is more instructive for us than to see how the universal human religious instincts, bad and good, have exhibited themselves in various ages and countries, and are still to be seen among Christians. For to see them in other religions is to recognise their true origin : to study elsewhere superstitious or materialistic use of ceremonies or of sacred books ; to study sacerdotalism, sectarianism, legends of magical powers, hatred of new light ; to study these, I say, in the history of other religions is to know that when we meet with similar phenomena among the records of Jewish or Christian nations, we may be dealing, not with the essence of Christianity, but with the instincts of human nature, which are not only not peculiarly manifested under Christianity, but are in the highest degree opposed by its spirit. We learn to see things in their true origin, and call them by their true names. The study of comparative religion must therefore be a source of much light ; and light is pre-eminently what we want in this age of confusion.

But, on the other hand, if we think that comparative religion deals with the whole of Christianity, deals with its power and its spirit as well as with its form

and its abuses, we shall make a great and momentous error. "Religion" is multiform, transient, external; revelation is one and progressive and spiritual. Christianity must be regarded as essentially a power, as a light, as a revelation; only accidentally as connected with certain religious forms and dogmas. The Christian religion is *allerveränderlichste*, the most mutable of all things, as has well been said by Rothe; and almost the same thing has been said by Newman; the Christian revelation is the most indestructible of things; it is light, it is life, it is growth, it is *πνεῦμα*, it is spirit.

And now you may say, "Religion," in this sense, the form and dogma, I understand. But what is revelation? Can there be a revelation that is not expressed in form and dogma? Can I conceive of it apart? Is it not a pure abstraction, like life apart from the living organism?

It is difficult to answer this question at all, much more to answer it at the end of a sermon already long enough. The word "revelation" implies a theory; it is a way of regarding and grouping facts. The facts are the history of man, the development, continuous and discontinuous, of the spiritual insight and forces of mankind. These facts are what they are, and we may hope by study to arrive at some knowledge of them. But we need theories to group facts; and the theory which is expressed by the word revelation is this, that man is, in his present condition, a partaker in some inchoate manner of that controlling universal consciousness which we call God; which illuminates the mind and conscience of man: that man is, or possesses, a *φάνερωσις*, a manifestation of God. The control of God is exhibited in its effects,

and one of the effects is the moral education and evolution of man. The growth, then, and development of this manifestation of the spirit of God in man, and by man, and to man, is revelation.

To those who are deeply impressed with God's influence on the hearts of man, to those who grasp this God-theory—this revelation-theory—it carries conviction. They read and see the history of man in its light—they see the Spirit striving with man—the Eternal Consciousness more and more revealed in the inchoate, time-bound individual. All the world of nature and history speaks of God. It is a theory which man cannot perfectly master, nor apply to every detail, nor prove conclusively to all minds, but in spite of this it convinces such as grasp it. Discovery becomes indistinguishable from revelation. All is the work of God. Revelation, then, as I have used the word above in contrast with religion, is that direct influence of God on the souls of men which teaches them, chiefly by way of discovery, truth in morals and in knowledge of God. It has acted in part through men whom we rightly call inspired; its history is in part contained in books which for the same reason we rightly call inspired; and this revelation was consummated, though, as He Himself has taught us, it was not completed, in Christ, that Divine Presence among men. In Him culminates the revelation of God's will concerning us.

And now, if I have not quite exhausted your patience, there may be time to draw two or three important inferences from this contrast between "religion" and revelation.

First, as to the position of ourselves, the clergy. We have a twofold duty. We are at once ministers

of religion, and are heralds of revelation. And our special difficulty, one which many of the clergy keenly feel—the difficulty of being perfectly honest and consistent—arises where these duties seem to conflict. As ministers of religion, we have to take the world as we find it, including the strong religious instinct. There is much, very much, in this instinct that is good, and leads men upwards ; as well as something that is bad, that degrades and darkens men's minds. It is not the vocation of the clergy to attempt to alter a world of traditions, and the hereditary feelings of untold centuries ; and religion—that is cultus and dogma—is one of the appointed means, we cannot doubt, of educating the world. External forms and authoritative teaching are absolutely necessary, as even Comte discovered ; and we cannot look forward to a time when they will not be necessary. It is only in heaven that there will be “no temple.” On earth the sacraments and the reverent ritual, the assembling of ourselves together, the form and order of a church, its creeds and articles, are in their degree necessary, though mutable ; they are not only the channel through which revelation is transmitted, they are essential to its permanence. But on the other hand, just as our bodies change, yet our personality continues, so it is with religion. Our Church might be disestablished, or the Nonconformist Churches established ; views of Episcopacy, liturgies, sacraments, creeds, even of the Bible itself, as different from ours as are ours from St. Paul's, may some day prevail ; and yet the Christian revelation remain undimmed as the light of the world. And therefore we must never forget that we are more than ministers of religion : we are the heralds and evangelists of the

Christian revelation. We have therefore to try to do in our degree what Christ did—contend on proper occasions with the lower religious instinct, and transmute it by the light of revelation. We ought not always to give way to the lower tastes of those who, with the tenacity of timidity, would make their Christianity consist of ritual and dogma alone, or even give such persons and such tastes a high importance. We must regard these tastes as the mark of the uninstructed, the emotional, the lower nature. We must do so with wisdom ; depreciating these things only as ends, but valuing them as means. For it is the Christian life : charity, purity, justice, forgivingness ; it is the consciousness and love of God as our Father, and of our brotherhood with all men, and the varied duties that arise from this brotherhood ; it is the light that the fact of the resurrection of Christ throws on the great problems that agitate all men, the meaning of life and humanity, and our hope as individuals ; it is these, the sanction of duty and the illumination of life, and not cultus and dogma, that, if we would be followers of the prophets and of Christ, we shall place in the first rank. Being ministers of religion, we must give its due place to religion ; but we are ministers of revelation also ; and with the Bible and ecclesiastical history before our eyes, with their teaching on every page how ministers of religion have opposed and darkened the revelation that came through the prophets and Christ, we shall surely see the special danger of our calling, and be on our guard against it.

Secondly, this view of revelation and religion will enable us to understand men who have abandoned our dogma and are indifferent to our cultus. It is

perhaps our fault if they think that this is all that Christianity has to offer. But they do not and cannot escape from the Christian revelation, even though they call it by another name. It is light ; and in that light some of them live and walk ; and the cultus, the ritual, the *θρησκεία* which they adopt may not be wholly dissimilar to that "pure" cultus or ritual or *θρησκεία* of St. James, which consists in charity and purity and unworldliness, and is, along with the sacraments, the only Christian ritual ordained in the Bible. For we must not forget that the Christian revelation *has* a peculiar cultus of its own. It has the sacraments, which were "ordained by Christ Himself," and must for ever be observed in all their original simplicity and spiritual significance ; and it has this new definition of "religion" (in its limited sense), in which St. James has expressed the mode, the ritual, in which God has now revealed that He is to be worshipped—the service of man in all charity and purity and unworldliness.

The subject would be very incompletely dealt with if I did not point out, thirdly, how this conception of religion, as distinct from revelation, enlarges our notion of the latter. Revelation is God's voice, that has spoken and speaks to men "at sundry times and in divers manners." It is impossible to define it precisely. It is the voice of God, His *φανερώσις*, His revelation in humanity. In all nations, even in prehistoric times, we cannot doubt that His spirit illumined man, and directed his spiritual and moral education and evolution. The record of revelation is to be read in that evolution itself, as we are now beginning to understand. But the key to the interpretation of that record is furnished us by the Bible,

as it is by no other book ; is seen in the Jewish nation, as it is seen in no other nation ; and standing out far above all others is the revelation of God's purpose in Christ. Here is the goal of man, far, far above us, as heaven is higher than the earth, yet still our example and our goal ; and, more than this, a redeeming power that draws men up to Himself. And His promise that revelation should not cease when He left the earth has been fulfilled, and even now light is pouring on us which we shall not hesitate to recognise as a true revelation. With this enlarged conception of revelation we shall never be alarmed at fresh knowledge ; it is on the side of revelation, for it is a part of revelation. It is

“ Not through eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light.”

Not only through Christ, as recorded in the Bible, but through all truth, whatever its form or guise, “ comes in the light ” of revelation. From Christ it all comes ultimately ; from that Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. I firmly believe that with this enlarged conception of revelation we set a far higher value than ever, and a truer value than ever, on the revelation of God in Christ, as well as on all other revelations of God.

And, fourthly, this leads me to remark how clear a light is thrown by this distinction on the wearisome question of the relation of science to religion. Are they opposed ? men incessantly ask. Unquestionably they are, taking religion in its narrow sense. But science and revelation are not opposed. Science and revelation—let it be remembered that science is a part of revelation rightly understood—are co-operating, and always have co-operated to purify religion.

In this purification science is a most valuable aid ; an aid, as all can see who know what the age-long, evenly-balanced contest has been, a most valuable aid, because her revelations are in the long run indisputable and accurately definable ; an aid only, and by no means a substitute, because it is only on certain finite parts of the total field of revelation that she can assist.

Once more we shall value cultus more, and not less, when we better understand its relations to revelation. We can consistently regard the form as unimportant, and yet *a* form as essential. But it is the revelation, not the form, that we shall value. And as regards dogma, though we shall be unable completely to separate revelation from the form of dogma it tends to assume, yet we shall notice that while propositions which appeal to the intellect, and require reasoning to demonstrate them, are of the nature of dogma and therefore temporary, those facts and moral principles which we accept and assimilate by faith, by the individual touch of the soul with God, those that stir our conscience—these are of the nature of revelation. And while we hold the dogma as an imperfect but approximate expression, and legitimately strive to perfect that expression, we cling to the revelation, for it is our life. And when we see how almost inextricably the two are involved by the long traditions and hereditary feelings of the world ; when we see how, to meet the demands of life, the pure gold of revelation has to be adulterated and coined into religious forms and doctrines, we shall not lightly undervalue those forms and doctrines. We shall look rather at the truth they may be made to convey, than at the error in their form. We shall

value the shell for the sake of the kernel, though we shall not mistake the shell for the kernel. We shall hold and teach the dogma honestly and firmly, as the best approximate expression for the revelation of God.¹

It is found by experience to be possible consistently to hold the widest view of revelation ; to believe that God's Spirit educated Brahmin and Greek and Roman as well as Jew ; to feel all human history instinct with God ; to be convinced that man's spiritual nature is so continuously and so universally responsive to God's influence that discovery is identical with revelation, being simply the same fact looked at from different points of view ; to understand that the gradual revelation of God's will and purpose, His education of the human race, is identical with, and may be otherwise expressed as, the evolution of the moral and spiritual nature of man ;—it is found by experience to be possible, I say, to hold this view, which seems to me a strictly scientific view, of revelation, as a continuous illumination manifested as a continuous discovery and progress, and yet to accept and hold and value, as the vehicles and coins of the most precious parts of this revelation, the ordinary cultus and doctrine of our Church. For we recognise that while they are not of the nature of eternal truth, they are forms by which glimpses of that truth are conveyed to us very imperfect human beings, who at present constitute humanity. We are unable to receive truth in any absolute form ; and in receiving or communicating it in the form of dogma, it is only by remembering

¹ τὸν γοῦν βέλτιστον τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων λόγων καὶ δυσεξελεγκτότατον.—
Plat. *Phædo*, 85 C. See the whole passage.

ourselves and reminding others that the form is inadequate, that it ceases to be misleading. But for the vast mass of mankind it is of far more importance to hand down to them and through them the leading truths of revelation in *any* form, than to insist on the inadequacy of the form. Of course men trained, as men ought to be trained, to criticise and question everything, may feel that the cultus and dogma of Christianity in its present form, if put forward and insisted on as absolute, authoritative, exhaustive truths, are a concealment of the higher light; and their honesty compels them to renounce, and even to denounce, them. But when such men come in contact with their less critical brethren, whose convictions and hopes and faiths must be clear, defined, emphatic, dogmatic, to whom vaguer and more philosophical expressions convey no meaning, they will discover that the language in which revelation is transferable to them is, to a far larger extent than they anticipated before trial, the current language of cultus and dogma. They will be powerless to find another shell for the kernel. Nevertheless, such men will fearlessly purify their teaching from the grosser dogmas from which Christian teaching is by no means wholly free, and will try to contend, to a certain extent, with the lower religious instinct in the true spirit of their Master, educating their people to feel the spirit, and not only see the letter.

Surely we shall feel more and more that revelation includes the great teachings of history, of morality, and of science; that these, rightly read, strengthen our conviction of the spiritual brotherhood of man and sonship to God, which were in an especial sense the work of our Lord Jesus Christ to reveal. He

revealed them—He drew aside the veil, and showed us that these truths were there for us to see ; and more than ever we shall find in Him the revelation of truths which history, ethics, and science by themselves fail to make plain. Where else shall we find writ plain the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God ? How phantasmal are the forms in which it can be deduced from any source except the living Christ ! So at least it seems to me.

But I have travelled somewhat far in my endeavour to contrast the limited sense in which *religion* is used in this phrase, "comparative religion," as a mutable expression of a part of man's nature, with *revelation*, that ever-broadening light that is illuminating the world : and now I must at last conclude.

In treating, then, of comparative religion, we must not be misled when we treat Christianity as one of the great "religions" of the world. We now know what we mean. We mean that the revelation of God was universal, but was pre-eminently seen in the Jewish nation, among whom according to the flesh Christ came ; that the revelation of God made in Him was, so far as we know, final, supplemented only by the continuous educating influence of His Holy Spirit on man. But that in the nations which have most fully adopted the Christian revelation there has developed itself a cultus and dogma, in other words a "religion," derived by no means exclusively from revelation, but in large measure from sources which it is the function of history to trace, and of philosophy to examine ; and that these developments form the mutable dress of the immutable and ever-accumulating revelation of God.

What a guide, my friends, is there here to our

conduct and our thoughts ; what hope, what inspiration ! The pages of history open themselves for our guidance. Had you lived in the days of the prophets, had you lived in the days of Christ, had you lived in the days of St. Paul, of the Reformation—had you lived in any great age when new light streamed on the world—would you not long with a consuming desire to have been among the few who opened eyes and hearts to that light, and bravely sided with the few against the many—with light and charity and revelation and God, against darkness and cruelty and obscurantism and human passion even though they took the sacred name of “religion” ? Would you not long for this with a consuming desire ? Then remember that the struggle is incessant, and is quite as plain now as ever it was. Remember that it *is* a great age in which you are living ; try to contribute to its greatness. We are called on by all the voices of the past, by the solemn duties we owe to the future, to conquer our lower selves, to subdue “the child that is in us” that craves exclusively for the external and the positive ; we are called on to use these things as not abusing them, and to live as Christ bids us, in the spirit, and not to entangle ourselves again in the yoke of bondage. “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free” ; for that is the good news of the Gospel of Christ.

NOTE.—Some of the later paragraphs were omitted or shortened in the delivery.

VIII

THE PRESENT CHURCH REVIVAL¹

“Can these bones live?”—EZEK. xxxvii. 3.

THERE are two periods in our recent Church history which offer a suggestive comparison to the present time. One was the period of a hundred years ago, towards the close of the much-abused eighteenth century, the century of spiritual deadness and of theoretical morality in the Church of England. The question of the prophet was then asked in different tones of incredulity by sceptics, by statesmen, and by Churchmen—“Can these bones live?” And yet they were then moving with an altogether new life. The great influence of the Wesleys and Whitfield, visible during fifty years only on the masses outside the Church, was at last felt in the Church itself: below all the deadness there was a stir among the young; and in the persons of Scott and Milner and Venn and Simeon and many another there was a real revival of corporate life and of personal religion in the Church itself. Slowly and almost unnoticed the stream of influence poured in, and in a few

¹ Preached in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, on Sunday evening, 8th February 1885.

years transfused into the Church a new ideal of holiness and of zeal for the souls of men, an ideal which has never been lost.

Fifty years passed away, and with them all the early heroes and fathers of that movement. Somehow the wave seemed to die away. Perhaps they lost their great principle of evangelisation and brotherhood of the saints; perhaps they reached the limit of their possible influence; but what had been a spirit of life fixed itself as a party, and the party crystallised itself where it was left by its early chiefs, and its life began to dwindle, and its voice to be less sturdy; and once more, fifty years ago, the inadequacy of the English Church to meet the vast and varied needs of the English nation began to press on many an earnest soul. Once more was asked the same question in the same varied tones, from within, from without—"Can these bones live?"

Yet you know that even then there was in full young life in Oxford a movement ridiculed by some few, dreaded and suspected by a few more, but ignored by the great majority of Churchmen, which, nevertheless, flooded the Church of England with a new power and energy which makes this nineteenth century a great epoch in our Church history.

Nevertheless, now again, within and without our Church, in the same tones of anxiety, of indifference, of triumph, is asked the same question—"Can these bones live?"

I am speaking to Churchmen in the strongest centre of Church feeling; and you may perhaps wonder that I so speak of the Church now. But be not deceived. We must not be under the illusion that fresh activity, and more churches, and more

money, and more communicants, not even that stronger Church feeling and brotherhood and faith within the inner circle of the clergy, means life. This is to read history in vain. It may blind us, it may deafen us to the Voice now audible—Cut it down, cut it down, it cumbereth the ground. I do not mean only the political cry for disestablishment ; this is but a symptom ; and has besides other far-reaching causes to which I do not allude. But I mean the far deeper feeling that our National Church and religion is not wholly truth-loving—nay, that it is tainted with insincerities and make-believes ; and that it is not endeared to the heart of the nation. We are not rooted in their affections. What do the two millions newly enfranchised care for the Church ? What do the many who are thoughtless, or the few who think, care for us and say of us ? And so once more is heard in every society the old question, “ Can these bones live ? ” It is asked in prayer, it is asked in scorn, it is asked in anger, and it is asked in incredulity.

I have said that these two periods, that of one hundred and that of fifty years ago, were parallel to our own. In each of them, as a rule, men failed to see the new hope. The old seemed to have reached its limit of growth, and there was nothing they could acknowledge as a new birth. The new hope seemed to lie in stiffening and straining the old principles. Therefore the dignity of the Establishment became more dignified ; the dogmatism became more dogmatic. So it always was and so it is, *mutatis mutandis*, to-day. They saw no new birth, and yet there it was in both cases, in its humble cradle, before their eyes, had they had but eyes to see it.

And so the question forces itself on us, and most of all on you who are young, what and whence is the new birth of our time, if there is any? What new and mighty current of life is already, almost unnoticed, unappreciated, beginning to pour into the streamlets of our Church, soon to fill its main channel? For fifty more years have passed, and the time has come.

I will try and tell you young men what I seem to see, for the vision is full of power and hope and faith; and I cannot but earnestly desire to help you all to pour your accumulated and glorious power of youth into this new current of hopeful life, to which some who have lately gone out from you are so nobly contributing.

The new current that has been setting in for some years, and is now, I think, clearly definable, is the resolution to deal—as the Church of England, as a great national organisation—with great social reforms, and the conviction that the truest service of Christ, who went about doing good, is fidelity in the effort to “seek first the kingdom of God” here on earth. It may be too late to save the nation, it may be Quixotic; but the Church will try. To give precision to my meaning I add that amongst these great social reforms there stand most conspicuous the movements for temperance, purity, education, for better housing of the poor, better recreation, better land laws, and better labour laws: these and all else that concerns the total social condition of the millions that make the nation. The Church, as a Church, is resolving to deal with these questions.

This age is actually upon us before we are aware. The moral centre of gravity of the nation has shifted

to these questions, while we still thought it was with us in our reading-desks and pulpits, and behold our pulpits and reading-desks are following the moral centre of gravity of the nation. History is repeating itself in the unwillingness of the inner circle to believe that this is the new power, the new phase of English Churchmanship. Even you are half incredulous; you thought the prophet would bid you do some great thing, and behold he only bids you to wash and be clean. Or you say it is good, it is moral, it is perhaps religious, but it is not Churchmanship. Nay, my friends, it is not only good and moral and religious, it is Churchmanship—Church of Englandship—the truest of all. I do not mean that every Churchman must busy himself with all of these questions, or with any of these; but that the leaders must, that the Church as a body must. The Church has many members, and all members have not the same office. This is now the work for its brains, and its hearts, and its hands.

There is one reason perhaps in particular for which you distrust and doubt whether this can be true Churchmanship. The impulse to it comes from our foes. That is the very reason for which history teaches us most to trust it. A century ago the revival came from the influence of exactly that which the old country Churchmanship supremely detested—Dissent and enthusiasm. Fifty years ago it was inspired from a source which the Church of that day supremely distrusted—mediævalism and Rome. So now the impulse comes in some considerable measure from that collection of influences, besides enthusiasm, which as Churchmen we are apt most to detest and distrust and fear; from criticism,

from science, from positivism, from secularism, and what does not come from these—and there is a great deal that does not come from these—comes from a source that confounds our principles and perplexes our classification—from good men whom we cannot call good Churchmen. Can any good come, we ask, out of such a Galilee as that?

It is undeniable that the motive power is partly in these forces, or at least that the way has been cleared by them. See how criticism and science have cleared the way; as is admitted by all the thoughtful. Criticism, in its harshest dogmatisms or its sweetest reasonableness, while it has not done away with, has not marred one outline of that marvellous figure of the Son of Man and the Divine Redemption of Humanity, while it has not destroyed our Gospel histories nor made our faith vain, while science has not dissolved the miraculous, nor evolution replaced revelation, still less touched the foundation of all religion, the obedience to the law of duty which we are constrained to identify with the law of God; yet they have happily dissolved something of the stern and harsh dogmas of a theology, they have displaced something of a crude supernaturalism, which rested on the literal text alone. And by doing this our foes have proved themselves our truest friends, for they have thrown us more and more into the study of Christ Himself. And I do not think it can be doubted that at this moment that great personality of our Lord Jesus Christ is more clearly lifted up in the eyes of the world than it ever was before; towering more above His disciples, more above His biographers, more above His exponents, more above His Church; towering

to heaven itself. And to throw us into the study of Christ rather than that of His exponents is to fill us with a new inspiration and life and strength; it is to fill us with humility, for we all become as little children in that sublime Presence; it is above all to fill us with the sense that social wrongs are monsters and foes to be met and fought hand-to-hand in the name of Christ and in His service. Surely our foes have been our friends if they have taught us this.

So, too, those philosophical and reactionary movements that I spoke of which make the Churchmen of to-day stiffen and bristle, and enable us to understand how the cries of Dissent or of Rome used to make our fathers snort in wrath or terror—and, indeed, those cries have not yet wholly lost their power—these movements and theories have, like criticism and science, revealed to us defective sides in our Church principles. They have shown us that we were occupied too much with opinions, which we mistook for faith; too much with dogmatic Church teaching, which we mistook for the knowledge of God and of eternal truth; too much with the other world to the neglect of this, at any rate in our words; and that, in fact, we too, like our forefathers, have failed to enter into the whole of the spirit and faith of Christ our Master.

Were the philosophers, then, the enemies of Christ? They identified the visible Church with Christ—did we not seem to dare to do so ourselves?—and seeing our faults, our want of Christlike simplicity and heroism and love, our frivolity, our materialism, our spirit of disunion, they hurled shame and contempt on Christ. That shame and contempt was meant for us, my brother Churchmen;

but let us meekly submit—yes, even to the stripes and spitting, that we may spare the sacred name of our Master. We have deserved it all.

Besides these negative influences, and apparently unconnected, except that in the divine evolution of the history of a people all things are connected, is the resolute grappling with social questions by good men whom we did not count good Churchmen. The great temperance battle was fought for forty years, not by Bishops and clergy, but by humble laymen, by Nonconformists, by women, with here and there a scattered clergyman, amid much contempt and much distrust. It rose, as Wesleyanism did, among the people, and it was long before the Church, twenty years or so ago, began to feel its power. It was not the Church of England, but the popular constituencies of 1868, that brought the need of compulsory education to the conscience of Parliament. It was not, as a rule, the clergy who stood by industrial co-operation, when to be a co-operator was to be suspected of being a communist. It was not from the Church of England that an effective voice was given to the "cry of the outcast poor," and it is still not from our conferences and convocations—it is rather from extreme outsiders like Carlyle and Froude—that is heard so as to pierce the dulled conscience of the Church, sermon-proof, emotion-proof, the old prophetic cry, old and yet ever new, that God desires mercy and not sacrifice ; and that services and sermons, and churches and communions, and prayers and priests, and all the apparatus of worship, are as the small dust of the balance in God's sight compared to mercy and justice and righteousness and love.

All these and other great practical uprisings of thought have been originated and have acquired much of their present momentum outside the Church of England. Churchmen of the inner circle have looked on them with a benign interest, as if it was not exactly Churchmanship to be deeply swayed by them. A sound Churchman might patronise them to a certain extent; indeed, lately it has been creditable to do so. They never thought that here is the new spirit, the new life, the new Churchmanship.

Yet so it actually is. These many influences, critical, philosophical, secularist, philanthropic, have at length fairly shifted the moral centre of the Church; and some from the inner circle of so-called Churchmanship are leaders in these great causes. The new Bishop-elect of London—to whom we all wish God-speed in his great work—is chairman of the National Temperance League, with all denominations of good men on his committee. The Bishop of Durham—and there is no greater name among Churchmen of to-day—is the head of the great White Cross Army, with a similar band of fellow-workers. The Bishop-elect of Lincoln, whom Oxford—*desideriis icta fidelibus*—will long deplore, has unequalled influence in the same cause. My own diocesan, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, is chairman of a similar committee for investigating the conditions of life among the poor of Bristol. The public schools and the Universities are doing something with their Missions in great cities. It is like the Church revival by the Franciscans and Dominicans, who faced the evils of great cities by a new and splendid audacity, and reinvigorated the Church. Wherever

you turn you will find clergy, especially among the young, caught by the new spirit ; some, of course, do but touch the new work with the tips of their fingers ; they lack the needful force and daring. But others, and a fine and manly type they are, feel that the time has come ; and they find in the new Churchmanship a field for their energies and intellect, a field for self-sacrifice, for the love of their Master ; a work worthy of our great historic and national Church and its wealth and influence ; a work, above all, worthy of the servants of that Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

I have spoken of non-religious, and even anti-religious, influences which have gone to produce this movement. But there is another influence, less easily formulated, which is profoundly affecting us all ; it is the conviction, borne in upon us from all sides—let us frankly say taught to the spirit of man by that ever-present Divine Spirit which is leading us into truth—the conviction that the Church of Christ is primarily and pre-eminently a self-organising association, of which Christ is the Head, for the spiritual education of man in the faith and spirit of Christ. When this once flashes in on the reason and conscience of an individual, or a Church, it is like daylight in the morning extinguishing the tapers of a sick man's room ; or like the fresh air, and stars, and silence of high heaven after the atmosphere of a church. If the Church of England can, in time, grasp this principle it will find itself the natural leader of the people on points on which their sense of morality is roused and is keen ; and it may lead them further. If combined with proper measures of Church reform it may lead to a real nationalisation

of the Church of England, and avert for centuries the disgrace of disestablishment.

I need not tell you that all this practical work will not form the exclusive, not even a principal, subject of Church teaching. That will always be, as it has been, to awaken and foster spiritual life by the words of our Saviour, to comfort, to kindle, to inspire. Nor need I tell you that the old types will long continue, and that because they represent the character of certain types of Englishmen. It takes all sorts to make a Church of England. We shall long have the old eighteenth-century Churchman of the Establishment; we shall have the faithful Evangelical; we shall have the enthusiastic Anglican; and we may thank God that we shall have them all in our national Church. But all are being blended by this new type of Churchmanship, which is gradually sinking their differences to a secondary plane, and uniting them in spirit in the one true service of their Master. Dearer than our own souls; dearer than our own Church, is our Saviour, our Christ.

I have a very few words more to say. I hope I have not exhausted your patience. I was told that my sermon ought to be practical rather than speculative. Has it been sufficiently so? There was once a little page-boy who was sent regularly to church in the morning, and regularly catechised by his mistress on his return as to what the sermon had been about. He had one answer, which, he thought, suited every sermon; it was always given, and always accepted. "Please, ma'am, it was about being good." No doubt they were practical sermons. And so, in obedience to my instructions, I am going to say a very few words to you "about being good."

First, if you feel, as I do, that this is the new movement in the Church for which we have been looking so long ; that it is deep and true and permanent ; then it is your duty to put on a secondary plane those insoluble speculative questions which paralyse action, and which have seemed to so many men of every generation to be primary. For the primary function of the Church is to guide life, and to be a blessing to the people ; to make the nation good ; not to propose a new solution of the universe, nor to reiterate an old one. The verdict that you will strive for, as a brilliant essayist has lately told us, is not "Well guessed," but "Well done."

Secondly, if reason and heart and conscience are satisfied by this aspect of Church work, you will not, by a mistaken loyalty to the great men of the past or present age, suffer yourself to make the watch-words of your Churchmanship any minor points of form or doctrine. Nothing will distract you from the real aim of the Church of Christ. Of each such point you will say, this is nothing and that is nothing, but the service of man in the spirit of Christ is all. I pray you to remember Christ's most solemn words ; remember the solemnity with which they were introduced ; the veritable sacrament of life that he instituted—"As I have washed your feet, so ye ought also to wash one another's feet." It is the consecration for ever of the humblest service of man.

And lastly, if Oxford, if young Oxford, is once again to take the lead, and flood our Church and country with new life and health and vigour, then you young men must judge and set in order your own lives in the light of these social reforms ; and you must do so at once. Is your society such that

from it may be expected to grow the finest flower of this lovely Christian life—temperate, pure, thoughtful, self-controlled ; not ascetic and sour and puritanical, but generous and full of warm life ; rejoicing in the law of liberty and its strong self-restraint ; ready to lavish itself on great causes ? What power it would give to social reforms everywhere to say that “in Oxford there is no drinking now, no card-playing and gambling ; they are not so expensive in their amusements and embellishments as they used to be : luxury has gone out of fashion. The life is far simpler than it was.” Begin with yourself, with solid, self-respecting enthusiasm, and say—I never saw this before, but I see it now. Here is something worth doing and worth living for, worth being a Churchman for ; and by God’s help I will do it and live for it. I will let no more intellectual puzzles paralyse my action ; no more party symbols perplex me, or separate me from my brethren who serve Christ ; no personal indulgences or idleness weaken body and brain, and distract me from Christ, and from a Churchmanship which I now at last understand. This is my path, and shall be to the end.

Say this, O young Oxford, and then once more of the Church of England shall come true the words of the prophet of old, and the Lord God shall say, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these bones, that they may live : and they shall live, and be an exceeding great army, and ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken it, and have performed it, saith the Lord God.”

IX

THE CHURCH AND THE LABOURING CLASSES¹

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—MATT. vi. 33.

YOU are probably all aware that to-day's offertory in this Abbey will be, by the wish of the Dean, given to the People's Palace in East London. Probably also there are few here present who do not know what this People's Palace is to contain. Speaking very briefly, it includes the gift of technical schools, library, concert hall, recreation ground, gymnasium, and baths, to occupy a site of about five acres in the Mile End Road, in East London. It is for this object that I am asked to preach.

I do not intend to go into any further details or history of the scheme. These are given in the papers that have been supplied you. But I propose to offer a few remarks on the significance of the fact that an offertory in this ancient Abbey of Westminster, consecrated to the worship of our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be given to objects which a few years

¹ Preached in Westminster Abbey on Sunday morning, 21st February 1886.

ago would have been thought so secular and so remote from the worship and service of Christ as baths and gymnasium and technical schools. It is within the memory of most people that collections were made in church for little else than church expenses, and missionary and Bible societies, and relief of the poor. What is the meaning of this extension and alteration of the range of our religious almsgiving? Is it an upward step or a downward? Are our aspirations deserting heaven for earth? Are we giving up eternal hopes, and saying that we must make the best of this world for ourselves and others? Or is it that we better understand how the physical, the artistic, the intellectual sides of human nature react on the spiritual; and that if we would aim at real progress in virtue and godliness, we cannot neglect, as a nation, any side of this many-sided creature, man? It marks a real change. It is a step upward or downward. Which is it?

I believe the answer to this is perfectly clear. It is an upward step. This development of the undying spirit of Christianity which we are witnessing marks an onward step in what we may call the application of the principles of Christianity to the national and world-problems which press on us now so heavily. I have not forgotten my text, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*" These are our Lord's words, and they stand eternally true. And we do not at once associate the kingdom of God with technical schools and winter gardens. Nevertheless, we must face the questions—What is the kingdom of God? What is righteousness? How are we to seek it? What are the paths toward it? Are we quite satisfied that we, as a nation and

as a Church, have sought it, and are seeking it, as wisely as we might? Have we grasped the whole problem which the Church of Christ has to face? It represents that element in man which touches on the ideal, the eternal, the divine, and it is therefore concerned with all that elevates and refines and purifies. Whole populations among us are dragged down by dulness, by the mere absence of healthy interests and inspiring emotions. Is it not the duty of the Church to attack this cause of moral deterioration?

The truth is we are face to face with a problem greater in some respects than any which the Church has had to face before. It is not one of to-day, or of this year; it is one of the century, or of several centuries—how to promote real worthiness of life under new conditions among the millions of whom our nation consists; how to prevent the formation of the vast “residuum,” the failures of our civilisation and our Christianity. Our national wealth has increased, our political liberty has increased, our knowledge of natural laws has increased enormously; but our national virtue and intelligence have not increased *pari passu*. Can it be said that the worthiness of life, either among rich or poor, is greater among us than it was? And what progress, except progress in character and worthiness, is worth calling progress?

The meaning of such a phenomenon as the Beaumont Trust is that a conviction is forcing itself home on us as a nation that all attempts to make life freer and happier without elevating character are worthless and even mischievous. Side by side with this conviction is growing another—that character is the slow result of many conditions, of which religion is only one, though an indispensable one. There

will of course be Secularists who will point to the failure of religion to grapple alone with these new and great problems, and will discard it in their enthusiasm for other means. We are certain that they are wrong in this, though their error is but the exaggeration, as error commonly is, of an overlooked truth. Their error is that they would ignore man's highest nature. But we Christians, on our part, are forced to recognise that there are other conditions necessary to the development of character besides religion. The education of the human spirit is the nurture of a living germ ; there must be a soil and climate in which it can grow ; it requires light and food, and it requires many-sided culture. Thank God that the highest spiritual gifts and virtue can exist sometimes even under desperately unfavourable conditions, whether of luxury or want ; God has His witnesses everywhere. But such exceptions do not disprove the rule. The aim of a Christian nation must be that all lives shall have the blessing of industry and of sympathy with others ; and that no man shall be so debarred from the possibility of getting an education in body, mind, and spirit, as to prevent him from rising to the highest spiritual level of which he is capable ; and this is less possible in the England of to-day than it was in the England of three centuries ago.

Therefore our Christian Church of to-day, which ought to be the very soul of the nation, the impulse and the guide towards all that is good, must give itself to these problems, and must work at the causes of these evils, and not only at their symptoms ; it must prevent, and not only palliate. Where are the causes?

The ultimate cause is not in our laws. Naturally

to the Revolutionary Social Democrat, who is not profound enough to see that the existing relations of society are the outcome and product of national character, these relations are the cause of all evils, including the defective standard of human virtue ; and he clamours for a social and political revolution, as if that would alter human nature. "It is not our morality, or want of morality," says the latest and most systematic exponent of modern Revolutionary Socialism, "which makes our economic relations what they are, but our economic system which makes our morality what it is." This is but a superficial philosophy.

The causes lie deeper than this—in human nature, and its lusts and passions, in the meanness, the selfishness, the untrustworthiness, the ungodliness of men and women, and our resulting national habits as seen in London, West and East. These causes, stamped on the race by the terrible law of heredity, can be but slowly affected, and that only by a still mightier power—the Holy Spirit of God, inspiring men and women with Christ-like devotion and love to their Master and their brethren. For this power can affect human nature itself—can transform national character ; and this is the root of the whole matter. This alone will make men fit to live under better laws. Of course the Christian Church takes as its ideal a Christian Socialism, in which all reap the fruit of their labour, and all labour for the good of others, as well as for themselves. Of course the Christian Church looks with hopefulness on co-operation as a training in virtue and brotherhood, and as a step towards a higher society. But it knows very well that the obstacle to co-operation is the lack of

national virtue, of common honesty, prudence, temperance, brotherliness ; and that as national virtue grows it will register itself in national institutions and national happiness.

You may remember that John Wesley regarded at one time with much alarm the increasing prosperity of the poorer members of the Methodist Churches. He feared that it showed too great an attention to their worldly interests. It did not occur to him at first that prosperity is the natural result of the self-denying care for their own families, the temperance, the self-respect, that are the Gospel's first practical lesson. What more practical, more convincing comment can be made on my text, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you" ?

I have made these remarks because the inaction of the Church in promoting social reforming legislation in the interest of the labouring classes is often pointed at scornfully by Socialists. But her true work is in reforming people, not laws. The laws are the result of the people. And hence it is plain that if the People's Palace is a scheme likely to raise the tone and character of our people, it is a legitimate and rightful work for our Church to advocate.

There is one parallel in history to the present problem, from which the Church may get much guidance and hope, and non-Church people may get much instruction. It is the dealing of the primitive Church with domestic slavery under the Roman Empire. Here were masses of men similarly condemned to a lower level of life by an institution as universally accepted as are our present social relations, or want of relations, of rich and poor, of

capital and labour. True, that there were among the slaves brilliant instances of virtue and godliness. Virtue and godliness were not confined to the politically free. The Gospel was the inheritance of the poor then as it is now. Nevertheless, slavery degraded man then, as the conditions of labour degrade myriads now. But Christianity did not proclaim war against the institution of slavery any more than it does now against the conditions of modern labour, free competition, and the iron law of wages. That would have been to preach a revolution, and to have thrown the world back. It preached to all men equality and brotherhood. It proclaimed to all ranks that in the kingdom of God was neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; it educated the slaves, gave them cultivation and personal dignity, and prepared them for freedom; and so the fetters disappeared, without a revolution, as snow melts before the sun. And our work in these centuries is the same; now that political equality is won, we have to make social equality possible; to melt away barbarism and ignorance, and passion for wealth, and all vulgarity and vice, by the light and warmth of culture and Christian love and Christian faith, and we do not play our part if we neglect this work.

A well-known writer has told us that our upper classes are materialised, our middle classes vulgarised, and our lower classes brutalised. If he had lived in the fourth and fifth centuries he might perhaps have made a still bitterer pessimistic epigram; for he would have ignored then, as he ignores now, the mightiest influence of all, the power of those in a society, be they many or few, whose eyes are not

fixed on earth but on the kingdom of God. It was they who abolished the slave and gave the world freemen ; and it is they who shall abolish the out-cast and the rough, and the idlers, whether of Belgravia or Bethnal Green, and shall give the world men of whom Christian England shall not be ashamed. Shall not the leaven work till the whole be leavened ?

I said it was Christian faith ; and so it was. It was the profound faith in the Incarnation of God in Christ, in the divine nature and destiny of man, and his sonship to God, that taught Christians then the worth of a human soul, whether of slave or free, and tipped with steel the spear of the spirit that slew paganism and the all-powerful institution of slavery. And it is faith now. If we believe, and just so far as we believe and are sure that the unlovely and ungracious ones of earth, yes, these London mobs that imperil our very civilisation, are our brothers and sisters before God, and that we cannot, and shall not in any sense enter the Kingdom of God in selfish isolation from them ; if we believe, as our fathers did, in the certainty of a righteous retribution, then life puts on a new meaning and offers a new work and a new hope. And which of us does not in some fashion believe this ? We believe it, but as it were in a dream ; spell-bound by custom and society, distracted by tangible comforts, dissuaded by tangible disappointments, from the duty of realising in practice the eternal ideal of Christian brotherhood.

As Christians, then, we know that the first thing to work at is character, and all that affects character. This is the way in which Christianity contributed to the solution of the first great labour problem that

the world presented ; and this is the way in which it must solve the present problem.

But let us come back to the particular object for which I am pleading. Why does London so stint its gifts to the Beaumont Trust? How slowly do the required thousands come in! Why is it so?

Is it because the scheme does not directly relieve distress among the worthy poor, and encourage thrift directly? Then learn what the Charity Organisation Society are doing, and strengthen their hands. Or is it because it is not a directly religious object? Then give to the Bishop of London's Fund. But listen first to what the Bishop of London says of this scheme. He writes to me: "I am very glad you are going to preach for the Beaumont Trust. The scheme is an admirable one, and deserves the heartiest support." Or listen to what the Archbishop of Canterbury says: "You did not need my assurance that I believe the scheme and its details to be the fruit of a true-hearted enthusiasm, and that the need is worthy of all the enthusiasm which can be raised for it. Good and wholesome recreation and amusement and 'entertaining knowledge,' as it used to be called, is to half the world essential to the healthful production of their work, and the enjoyment of it, as against the natural unwillingness to work. And half the world have none at all of it: and I cannot help thinking that the absence of it has no little to do with the abhorrence of work (of which we hear so much) in that very class. The Beaumont Trust seems to me to be a contribution towards remedying that, as well as a most blessed boon, if it can only be carried out, to the lively and industrious workers—and among

them the *boys* of London." Or listen to the Bishop of Bedford: "I cannot but take a very real interest in a scheme having for its object the moral and intellectual welfare of the working classes of East London, and I am looking forward with much hope to the accomplishment of the great project of the Beaumont Trust." Or listen to the wise and tender words of Dean Church: "I sent my small contribution to the Beaumont Trust because it seemed to me a reasonable and wholesome plan for furthering an object which we must all feel to be of great importance—that is, to diminish the wide gap between the many and the few in what cheers and brightens life and raises men out of what is dreary and coarse and hard in it. There are, I believe, still greater gifts of God than these, in which poverty and riches make no difference, and which are indeed the inheritance of the poorest. But ease and refined enjoyment, and the power of understanding what is delightful and elevating, are God's very precious gifts too, and it is part of Christian duty and of the law of Charity on the part of those who value them to make it possible for their brethren to share them."

No! Men do not hold their hands because they disapprove. It is partly from the mere habit of not giving; partly from ignorance; partly because they fancy that these evils are incurable, and that they are throwing money into a sink. "These evils," they say, "that you would cure by Beaumont Trusts and People's Palaces are the necessary outcome of economical laws, and economical laws are as unalterable as gravitation." It is false. Economical laws do but tell us what will happen if we don't prevent it. Economical laws are the expression of human

character, and the character of the nation can be profoundly affected by education, by religion, by example, by the self-sacrificing gifts and labour and influence of the noble and the wise and the good. Why do we not do a thousand times more, we who have "offered and presented unto God ourselves, our souls and bodies, for his reasonable service"? This, the service of our fellow-countrymen, is the service of God. If only our good people dared to be as good as it is in their hearts to be, how much they might do!

The most remarkable example of the effect of providing healthy amusements for the people, is, I believe, at Cleveland in the United States. I would refer you to the *Century* of January 1885 for an account of it. The scheme might be reproduced by some of our philanthropic capitalists in scores of our great towns with excellent results.

But if you wish to see with your own eyes the value of work of this kind, if any shadow or pretence of doubt exists as to its value, go some evening to the Young Men's Christian Institute for artisans and apprentices at the Polytechnic in Regent Street, a place which, perhaps,—so little do we know what is going on before our eyes—most of us still only associate with a Diving Bell and Pepper's Ghost. That Institute began elsewhere in 1873. In 1877 it was two hundred strong; in 1882 it was five hundred, and then it was moved to the Polytechnic. Now the regular members are between four and five thousand, besides some thousands who attend lectures. Work of this class, all social amelioration, is experimental. But it is wilful closing of the eyes to refuse to see that social education, such as is given by

libraries, gymnasiums, concert halls, and technical schools, combines naturally with higher influences and is of very great service in doing the only thing really worth doing—developing and improving the character of the people. Such institutions provide recreation, employment, amusement, instruction; they provide healthy outlets for the energies that will be drawn to vice when vice is the only opening provided for them. To minister to vice pays well—in cash; there will be no lack of its ministers for the present. Why do *we* not minister to virtue? It will pay well—though not in cash. It is for this we hold our wealth as trustees.

If one individual, one faithful trustee of wealth, has conferred this gift of the Polytechnic on West London, and has reaped from it a harvest of happiness and the blessings of thousands, why do not others do the same in different spots all over the city? There might well be thirty or forty such institutions. Are rich men and women with Christian love and faith and public spirit and clear insight so rare in our country? or is wealth so dear to them? so indispensable to their children?

Quite as sad a thought as that these places do not exist when there is such a need for them, is that those who could give them are so insensible to their opportunities and their trusteeship. They could rise to such a higher level of life and interests, if, instead of vying with others in joyless expenditure, and frittering away, or storing up their thousands, they had but the conception of the use of what God has given them, and of their own falling short of perfection by its misuse. "If thou wilt be perfect," said our Lord—not if thou wilt be saved, but "if thou

wilt be perfect"—and you know what He told us to do.

But you may ask, have I any right at all to speak to you on this matter? May I very briefly refer to my own experience? On a smaller scale, we of Clifton College have linked ourselves to a working man's quarter of Bristol. During the last four years we have with the assistance of friends built a mission room, and library, and games-room, and class-rooms; we are now completing the laying-out of two or three acres of pleasure ground in the heart of the district; we have clubs and societies of all kinds gathering round this nucleus. The general contributions of Bristolians, combined with our own, have built a fine church for six hundred people, which will be consecrated next week. Further plans are afloat—delayed for want of money only. No one can doubt for an instant that such institutions as I have mentioned are a strong influence for self-respect and mutual respect, for temperance—a greater influence perhaps indirectly for temperance than if restricted by rules of total abstinence—for education, for association in all good works, for good manners, and good fellowship, for all refining influences. They are, moreover, distinctly a strong influence that makes for true religion and godliness. They accustom people to act together harmoniously, they introduce a spirit of regulated order and courtesy that affects all social relations. Our rooms were described to me by one of the men as "the drawing-room of the district." The People's Palace might become the drawing-room of East London.

"Reason tempered with 'music,'" said Plato, "is the only guardian angel of virtue." You do not all

know what Plato meant. "Music," in Plato, means at once literature and art and science ; it means the elements of a liberal and refining education, and when he says it is the only guardian angel of virtue, he means that when no scope is given for men's higher nature and faculties, then the lower faculties become distorted and corrupt ; he would tell us that the hideous monotony of labour, and the low standard of education of our labouring classes, involve the certainty of widespread dissoluteness and devildom ; and that we fight "the appetitive element," "the many-headed beast," in human nature, not directly, by imposing restraints, but indirectly, by fostering the nobler elements, and thus implanting a self-controlling self-respect. There is a depth of wisdom here. Think of it well.

In gifts like these, gifts of "music," in the Platonic sense, there is scope for splendid and wise munificence. We should always aim at *sharing* our enjoyments and our refinements. I do not desire that people should strip themselves bare for the sake of others, but that they should feel it contemptible to grasp at pleasure in which others have no *share*. To spend hundreds on flowers and not send a share to the hospitals, both in money and flowers ; to spend thousands on music and art and books and elegancies, and not think of sharing them with others who cannot buy them ; to rent cushioned pews in fashionable churches, to fill this Abbey, the gift of the great dead, and yet not to dream of providing places of worship and clergy for our ever-growing suburbs ; stupidly to shut eyes and ears and hearts, and let the world wag on as best it may, this is indeed alike pagan and contemptible. When once a man's eyes are

opened, a new world of life dawns on him ; he sees something worth living for, and life seems all too short, and his purse all too shallow for him to do all he would like. Truly to the thoughtful and far-seeing the West gives more anxiety than the East. It is there that our unrepented national sins are thriving and festering. A "black assize" may yet be at hand. Wealth is poisoning the wealthy. We foul our Thames with what would fertilise our fields ; and we foul our West with what would fertilise our East.

Are we still afraid of trusting ourselves to the deep current that is bearing on England's noblest men and women towards a religion of righteousness, which prophets and apostles and the very Christ Himself proclaimed ? Do we think it will bury us in secularisms and socialisms ; tear us from our ancient landmarks ; destroy our Church ; perhaps dissolve the Rock of Ages ? No ! it will fill our creeds and hymns and prayers with new meaning ; fill our abbeys and cathedrals and churches with new life ; make them the fountains and inspiration to righteousness, the parade ground of armies where they hear the words of the Master whom they would die to serve, and whence they issue prompt to do His bidding.

Oh ! for more faith in the God of righteousness, and more obedience to His word ; now in the time of national distress and anxiety let us turn to Him. Our heavenly Father knoweth our necessities ; but He has bidden us to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" ; and then—it is no mystery—it is no miracle—it is the natural inevitable result, "all we need shall be added unto us."

X

CONSECRATION OF THE NEW PARISH CHURCH OF ST. AGNES, BRISTOL¹

“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

EXOD. xiv. 15.

THIS is the note which I wish to strike this evening —“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

Do you remember the circumstances when those words were first spoken? It was when the Israelites had first got out of Egypt, but were not yet in the promised land; they stood appalled at the dangers and difficulties round them,—with the Egyptians behind and the impassable sea in front,—and some hearts were faint. Then came the Word of the Lord, “Speak unto them, that they go forward.” All the memories of the long past were still doubtless fresh in their minds; the call of Abraham, the promises

¹ Preached in St. Agnes's Parish Church on 7th March 1886, being the first Sunday after its consecration.

NOTE.—The parish of St. Agnes has grown out of the mission district taken up by the masters and boys of Clifton College. The sermon is primarily of local interest only, but there must be corresponding historical associations in every parish, and the sermon may suggest the value of these associations.

to him and to his children, the long slavery in Egypt, the salvation under Moses and Aaron. They could look back and see that God's hand had been with them hitherto; and now they were to go forward, little knowing of the long history that would follow—the wanderings in the wilderness, the wars in Palestine, the kingdom, the exile, the return, the coming of the long-promised Messiah, Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, and then these nineteen Christian centuries, ever brightening onwards towards a more perfect day, preparing the way for the Kingdom of God.

We too, my friends,—whether I speak to you simply as parishioners of St. Agnes, or as representatives of the great Church of England, or still greater Church of Christ,—have a long history in the past, a history full of memories of God's mercy, and thankfulness, and therefore full of hope for the future; we too have a present, not without its dangers and difficulties; and we too have a long future before us,—much to suffer, much to accomplish, many a weary journey to take, ere we or our children inherit the promised land, the kingdom of God on earth; and the call to us also is, “Go forward.”

Let us glance, first, at the past. How full of historical associations and sacred memories is even this young church and parish! How far back into English history does that word “parish” take us! How it recalls to us God's long-continued goodness to His people of England! If there is now on earth a chosen nation, a nation privileged and pledged to the worship of Christ and to treasure His name, it is our dear nation of the English. I will

trace in some slight detail the history of this parish of St. Agnes and its ecclesiastical ancestry ; for this will be to give us a fresh interest in our church, a fresh dignity, as we see how far back we can trace its forefathers ; it will be to give us a fresh confidence in the permanence of the Church of Christ, fresh resolves that we will be worthy of the great inheritance we have received from the days of old, fresh hope and courage to go forward.

Let us begin then, this evening, by tracing the outline of the history of our young parish. It is a specimen, and a very instructive specimen, of the history of the Church of England, of its endowments, and of its antiquity. I am sure it will interest you, and you will not forget it.

The parish church of St. Agnes was consecrated last Tuesday, 2d March 1886, the parish being carved out of St. Barnabas, on the recommendation of the bishop's commission. How was it built and endowed ? It was built out of a subscription raised in Bristol, not a small portion of it having been contributed by yourselves, for you gave grandly. Part of it will be actually contributed this evening by us who are now assembled. Every penny is as voluntary a gift as what you may yourselves give this evening. How is it endowed ? It has been provided with a small endowment in the same way, out of voluntary gifts invested in the Funds. These voluntary gifts have chiefly been made within the last few years by residents in Bristol and Clifton, some of whom are present here to-night, and they are supplemented by grants from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners out of the surplus funds of cathedrals, which were themselves similarly endowed by gifts at

various times during our past history. We thus see before our eyes how the endowments of the Church of England have grown and grow from year to year to meet the growing needs of our large cities.

And now, what is the story of St. Barnabas? It was consecrated on 12th September 1843, having been built and endowed in precisely the same way, the parish having been carved out of St. Paul's.

And how was St. Paul's parish made and its church built, to go back another step in the genealogy? It was consecrated on 29th June 1794. It has a special interest, as being the church of the first new parish made since the Reformation, for the sake of the population that was then gathering in the eastern part of the city and outside its ancient limits. The parish was carved out of the ancient parish of St. James's, and the church was endowed with the gift of some land close by, on which houses are now built.

So we go back a long step farther, and ask what is the history of St. James's Church. It was built shortly before A.D. 1147—that is, about 750 years ago—by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, and was served by Benedictine monks from the richly endowed Abbey of Tewkesbury. It was then a splendid church, far finer than it now is. But at the Reformation the endowments were seized by Henry VIII., and the chancel of the church pulled down. Its subsequent history is also instructive. The church was left without endowment, and its advowson was sold by Henry VIII., in 1543, to Henry Brayne. His representatives sold it, in 1626, to the Bristol Corporation, who fixed the stipend of the vicar at £40, being half the profits of the St. James's fair at that time. On the passing of the Municipal Corpora-

tions Reform Act, in 1835, the advowson was sold to the Bristol trustees, who now possess it.

So we have traced back St. Agnes's parish through three generations—St. Barnabas, St. Paul, and St. James—and covered a period of 750 years. But we can go back farther still. Before St. James's Church was built, when the survey for *Domesday Book* was made, just 800 years ago, there were even then ancient churches in Bristol. Of these, St. Peter's was the chief. There are historical grounds for considering it highly probable that St. Peter's of Bristol was founded, as were the churches of St. Peter at Bath, Gloucester, and Worcester, almost exactly 1200 years ago, long before the Norman Conquest, by Osric, the first Christian king of this part of England.

Thus we have traced back the ecclesiastical ancestry of St. Agnes through a series of churches, all founded and endowed by voluntary gifts, for at least 750 years, and not improbably for all the twelve centuries that have elapsed since Christianity was first introduced into this part of England.

You will now, perhaps, look at that second pillar from the east end on the south side of the church with more interest than before. The figures carved in the capital are St. Barnabas, St. Paul, St. James, and St. Peter. They remind us of one portion of the history of our parish, and illustrate how far back its roots go into the history of our country. They represent, we may say, the father, the grandfather, the great-grandfather, and the great-great-grandfather of St. Agnes.

In other parts of England parishes may have been still older. It is said that Archbishop Theodore

divided England into parishes more than 1200 years ago; and he certainly encouraged landowners to build and endow churches for their tenants by giving them the right of appointing ministers if they did so; but even in this West of England we can dimly trace them for some 1200 years.

I have thus given you a glimpse of the relations of this parish church of St. Agnes to the long history of England and of the Church of England; and now it, in its turn, enters into that history, for who knows how many centuries to come? Did we not do well, then, to build it on solid foundations, and put good material and workmanship into our walls and our seats? They will witness for many a century to come that we in our day cared for the Church of Christ, and did not think anything too good for its sacred buildings. What changes has not the old tower of St. James's witnessed in the buildings round, while it stands unshaken! What scenes has it not witnessed of wars and revolutions! Even so shall our tower see all round it change, while it alone remains.

But we are involuntarily carried back farther still; back to the first foundation of the Church in Britain; back to the Apostolic Church, which literally fulfilled our Lord's commands to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"; back to our Lord Himself, the "chief corner-stone," the Saviour of the world; back still farther into the ancient Jewish Church, to the prophets and patriarchs who heralded the coming Messiah; back even to the earliest revelation of God, the first formation of a Church of God on earth. It is of that universal Church that we are members, as well as of the

Church of Christ, and of the Church of England in particular. And therefore are the great names of the ancient Church of God commemorated on these pillars, as well as spoken of within these walls. There, on the westernmost pillar on the south side, are Enoch, who "walked with God," type of the humble and faithful servant of God in all ages; Noah, who was "saved by faith," type of those who trust in God's promises and fear His warnings; Abraham, the "friend of God"; and Jacob, the father of the twelve patriarchs. Another pillar reminds us that we belong to the Church of which Moses, the lawgiver, and David, the sweet Psalmist, and Elijah, the stern denouncer of idolatry, and Isaiah, the prophet of the Gospel, were the forerunners; who all "died in faith, having not received the promise." Here too, on the easternmost pillar, are the four Evangelists, through whom we know the history and the words of our blessed Lord. The very name of our church, St. Agnes, recalls to us the persecutions in Rome sixteen centuries ago; St. Agnes, the virgin martyr, the type to us of maidenly holiness and Christian purity. On the westernmost pillar on the north side is St. Alban, the first British martyr, who was beheaded for his faith some fifteen centuries ago; Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, who, some thirteen centuries ago, led the first great mission from Rome to recover England from paganism. There also is Theodore, of whom I spoke before, the founder of our parochial system; and Bede, of eleven centuries ago, the ecclesiastical historian, the learned commentator on the Bible. On the next pillar, we claim among our spiritual ancestors and fellow-Churchmen Edward the Confessor, the last and

saintly king of the old English stock before the Conquest, who lies entombed in Westminster Abbey, which he rebuilt ; and with him on the same pillar are preserved the effigies and names of Anselm, statesman, theologian, archbishop ; Hugh, the sturdy Bishop of Lincoln, who braved our fierce kings for the cause of the people's liberty ; and Wycliffe, the translator of the Bible, the great reformer in Church and theology, of five hundred years ago.

And so the ages pass on, and space is lacking to commemorate the worthies and saints of the later centuries. Gladly here would we have commemorated Tyndale, whose monument crowns the Cotswolds ; Hooper of Gloucester, Latimer of Worcester, Protestant reformers, and martyrs for their courage in reform. Gladly would we have preserved the memory of great men of the next age, such as the wise Hooker, and the saintly Ken, and Milton, and Bishop Wilson, and many another, but space was lacking. Here, however, from this pillar close to the pulpit, look down on us Butler, with his *Analogy* in his hands, the ever-to-be-remembered Bishop of Bristol ; Wesley, the leader of the great Evangelical revival, whose "parish," as he said, was "the world" ; Wesley, to whom England owes so much, who, just 150 years ago, "adopted the strange custom of preaching in the open fields," within a few hundred yards of the site of this church ; Pattison, the martyr Bishop of the South Seas ; and last in the long series, Christopher Wordsworth, poet, theologian, historian, who died, as the loved Bishop of Lincoln, while this church was building.

It is not nothing to belong to a Church whose memories are such as these. They being dead, yet

speak. These all "died in faith," and we are their successors.

Such is a bare outline of some fragments of our past history ; and fresh from all these memories, recognising that the good hand of our God has been with our country and our Church, we are bidden to go forward in hope, in courage, in faith, in clear insight, into the unknown years and unknown difficulties that lie before us. God is our help and strength. He has never forsaken our fathers, and He will not forsake us. Courage, and forward !

And now, why have I so recalled to you the long past ? I have done so in the spirit of the writer of the 105th and 106th Psalms, who recounts the goodness of God to Israel of old ; in the spirit of the prophets ; in the spirit of Stephen and St. Paul, who taught the Jews, not only that God's hand had never forsaken them, but that He was ever leading them into new truth. These all bade their hearers get hope and guidance from the past, to understand the present and to forecast the future. What progress there has been when you look far back ! Little more than twelve centuries ago, as you have heard, this part of the country was only just emerging from paganism. If you look back only one hundred years, and see what Hannah More says of the utter heathenism and wild life of the people in the Mendips, you will not think that those days were better than these. If you dip into the journals of Wesley, you will see what Bristol was in the last century. Whitefield, the great preacher, proposed to go to America to convert savages. "What need," they exclaimed, "to go to America in search of savages ? The colliers of Kingswood are as untaught and cruel

as any savages." That is what was said less than 150 years ago. It is not true now. The day has dawned, though the full light does not yet shine.

And how has the progress been brought about? By a process as silent as the dawning of day. The light brightens in a few breaks in the clouds; it brightens and spreads; and the cloud itself is less dark, and behold the day is approaching, stealing insensibly over the whole sky. These great men, these saints of old, or saints of yesterday, whom we commemorate on our pillars, are but representatives of their age; they imply thousands below who were moved by the same spirit, and were doing the same work. The pinnacle is only lofty because it is borne on a solid and lofty tower. The crest of the wave catches the eye only because it is upheaved by the mass below. How has the progress been brought about? It is the work of the Holy Spirit of God in hearts such as ours which meet here to-night. It is not the work of a few distinguished and gifted men; it is the work of the good and the obscure. God sees not as man sees; and the praise of God is quite other than the praise of man. We know that "many that are last shall be first, and the first last" at that tremendous final verdict when many a human judgment shall be reversed, and then the righteous shall shine out as the stars in the firmament. Who are the righteous? They are those who strive to love God and love their neighbours, who strive to leave this world a little better than they found it; a little better for their having lived. This is something that we can all do in our different ways. God knows, my friends, that you have harder work than I; yea, and God alone can reward, not with noisy

praise of men, but with His own silent praise, the faithful work that is being done in this parish by men and women among yourselves for the common good. He can and He does bless you with happiness even now, and with eternal life. I am preaching now to you; but some of you preach a better sermon to me in your lives and work. Thus, and thus only, by silent individual work, is the blessed progress towards the kingdom of God brought about. Thus we are bidden to "Go forward."

And if there is any city in England in which we can trace the work of God through the years past, it is Bristol. Wesley thanks God in his journal that "God had given him such success among these gentle Bristolians"; that "God had given them such artless and teachable hearts." And many a minister and worker since Wesley's days has said the same. No city, moreover, has been blessed with so many and such devoted servants of God as this Metropolis of the West, this city of churches. I do not of course speak of our own Church only. I speak of the great Nonconformists also, from Robert Hall to Miss Carpenter, not to speak of living workers in Church and Nonconformity.

But I must be brief. I have spoken of the past and the present, rather than of the future, even though my text is "Go forward"; and I have done so for this reason. I know not the future any more than you do. But this I know, that the spirit in which to go forward is that of cheerful confidence and hope founded on the knowledge of God's mercy in the past and in the present. "He is at our right hand, and we shall not be moved." It is in this reasonable confidence that we must go forward.

And this church, and the work that will for all years to come centre round it, will help you to go forward. First, it will help you to deepen and strengthen your own personal holiness and love to God. Here you will come, I trust, in large numbers, and with ever-increasing regularity, to join in worship, and to get instruction, and to partake of the Holy Communion, that witness to Christian brotherhood and to the spiritual presence of Christ among us, and to go out comforted, more at peace with God and man, more bent on doing and saying the right thing, on honesty, industry, forbearance, kindness, temperance, thrift, and all family duties, and everyday virtues.

All the seats in the church are free for ever. It is your church. The church is, moreover, open all day and every day for you to come in for quiet, for meditation, for prayer.

It will help you to grow in goodness year by year. And this is the root of the matter. It is what you *are* that slowly affects the world ; not what you say, or what you wish to be thought. This church will help you to *be* good, to realise God in your lives ; and it is thus, and thus only, that the world is reformed.

Next, it will bring you into more sympathy with others, and open out to you some fresh lines on which you can work. Every member of a congregation should join it with the resolve to *do* something for others. We, being the parish church, are responsible for the parish. The parish church is not these walls ; it is you who meet in it. "Ye are the temple of God." It is in you, not in these walls, that the Holy Spirit dwells. Round the church

cluster already numerous activities ; and yet there is room for more workers. There is room for more of that quiet lay mission work, of which you are the ministers, among the poorest streets. Some of this work is, I know, going on already, and nothing that I have heard of in this parish has given me more pleasure. There is room for more work among boys and girls, and that of many sorts, in Sunday School and on week-day evenings ; room for more temperance workers ; for help in good recreation ; for all sorts of refining and softening and educating influences on some of the wilder elements of our population. There is the work to do. There is our Red Sea to cross. It is hard ; it may seem impossible, as did the crossing of the Red Sea seem to the Israelites of old ; but I am sure it shall one day be done.

And now, my friends, I commend you to God, and to His Holy Spirit ; praying that He may bless you who worship in this place now and in all the years to come ; that He will bless those who work among you, men and women, clerical and lay, in their various labours of love ; and especially I pray, and I ask your continued prayers, for him whom God has called to this parish to teach and preach the Word, and to guide and help in all that makes for morality and goodness. May this church and all that comes from it bring light and peace and joy to thousands now, and in the coming years and centuries, till the Kingdom of God shall itself come on earth.

XI

THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL¹

“First that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual.”—
I COR. xv. 46.

I WAS asked not long ago by one who was contemplating taking holy orders, whether I found it possible, without putting, by an effort of will, my critical and scientific faculties into abeyance, to retain a firm grasp of belief in the resurrection of Christ, and in our ever-continued personality after death, and whether I did not fear the uprising of these faculties and the extinction of my faith in these fundamental points of Christian doctrine. It was the difficulty he felt in clearing up his convictions on these points, and the fear of some subsequent reversal that alone prevented him from taking orders to which his whole nature and soul gravitated.

I am sure you will feel that these were straightforward questions; and that whether thus formulated or not, they have been in the minds of many of yourselves; and I am sure too that it is the duty of us older men to offer you such help and guidance as we can in thinking on these most important questions.

¹ Preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, on Sunday, 30th May 1886.

What I shall say will be incomplete of course ; it will not be a book or a dissertation ; and God forbid that I should venture to say anything novel, or claiming to be original on such a subject. It will only be a short and plain sermon, expressed as simply and truthfully as I am able.

My answer is that I do not find now, though for many years I did find, that a firm belief in our Lord's resurrection and in our own continued personality after death is inconsistent with such critical knowledge and scientific faculties as I possess ; and further, that having gone through the stage in which my questioner was, I have no fear of its recurring.

I think, therefore, I may be doing some of you good service if I show you how it is that in my case at any rate further knowledge and consideration has transformed what used to seem an exception into what now seems a universal law, and made a faith clear that used to be perplexed.

In the first place, you must understand what the fundamental thought of St. Paul was on this matter. I think this is not always quite grasped. And then, in the next place, I want you to see that this principle on which he was able to accept our Lord's resurrection and our own as a fact, a principle which he grasped firmly by a splendid insight, or rather by an inspired intuition before it had been proved, is now far more easily grasped by us, as it is far more clearly indicated to us ; and that it enables us also to hold with firm and intelligent faith these two fundamental doctrines.

What then is St. Paul's principle ? It is contained in the words "First that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual." These words form a sort of

epitome and climax in his argument. If you study, and I hope you will study, that great chapter, I Cor. xv., and put aside all minor details and illustrations, you will find, I think, that the argument comes to this, that our Lord's spiritual life after death, and ours also, are but instances of a general law, the most general law in the universe, that the natural leads up to and terminates in the spiritual. To St. Paul the continuity of life and spirit was the key to all he saw, all he read, all he felt. There lay the key to the great enigma of life and death. First the material, phenomenal, bodily life, this life that we now lead with all its delights and sorrows; and then something unimaginably greater, the continued life of the spirit in an ideal world. All the world had been dimly groping after this continuity, and the conviction of it, and at last came the proof. St. Paul must have had in his mind all the dim aspirations that his fathers had entertained, the shadow world of the Jewish prophets, the growth of eternal hopes, the yearning after certainty, the feeling, the groping for it among the noblest minds of the noblest races on earth. The truth had been all but achieved by the growing spiritual faculties of man; and then came something which explained and confirmed all those hopes. If a man were born blind and recovered his sight at midnight, and then went out for the first time to see the sky and stars and the early dawn, how mysterious as well as how amazingly beautiful would seem the growing light, the brightly-tipped cloud here, the clear-shining there; more and more wondrous and inexplicable the brighter it grew, and the plainer it made the sights of earth around him; and then, at last, rises

the sun itself and explains it all. Such was to St. Paul the resurrection of Christ. It was the long-expected fact, it was worked up to by a thousand hopes, it was the key to a thousand mysteries ; it was the explanation of all that we most need to be explained ; it was not a miracle ; it was a visible illustration of a universal law, already half caught sight of by the sages and prophets of the world.

This, I think you will feel at once, was St. Paul's thought. I am sure that after study you will know that it was so. He was prepared for an acceptance of the truth of a resurrection by a principle which was fundamental in his philosophy. "First that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual," and the vision which he had seen of Christ, the testimony of others that they also had seen Christ after his natural death, and the continuous spiritual consciousness that Christ was present with him, now convinced him that here was another application of his principle ; the spiritual succeeding to the natural ; our Lord's spiritual life following, of course, on his material life. It was not a miracle, though it was unprecedented ; it was a verification of a law.

This is how the case presented itself to St. Paul. But we cannot help feeling that besides endeavouring to understand what St. Paul meant and thought and believed, we have the far graver and deeper question, what is *true* ? Is St. Paul's great principle *true* ? We have far wider means of testing it. Is his flash of inspiration verified, and do we see that the natural finds its exit into the spiritual ? and further we must ask, was the verification of this principle which St. Paul saw in our Lord's resurrection a real verification or a mere delusion ?

I have said that to St. Paul the intimate connection of the natural and spiritual, the development of the one into the other, was the key to the enigma of life and death. He gives no proof of it. Such fundamental modes of thought are not demonstrable. We do not know into what far-off region of philosophic thought he had travelled before he formulated this great saying of which we are only beginning to see the significance. St. Paul's words have become the great hymn to death ; to death as a mere incident and step in life ; to death, that one undying prophet to men, which brings the spiritual world so near to our dim-sighted eyes that would otherwise fail to see it ; to death, not as the enemy but as the birthright of mankind.

Let us in the spirit of this great Hebrew philosopher, who more than any man, save his Master, lived in converse with the ideal and spiritual world, let us in his spirit open our eyes and hearts wide to contemplate this universe of men and things with our present lights, and see if we do not verify everywhere this great inductive law. Do we not see everywhere "first that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual"?

Look at our earth, with its long æons of preparation ; its molten oceans, its volcanic fires, its vast tidal seas, its deluges of rain, its ages of frost and ice, and the slow carving of its surface into all this fitting and homely loveliness of hill and dale. Look at the tale that the rocks tell us of the slow appearance of life, growing age by age, with endless variety, till at last, the crown of its development, comes man, a spiritual being, the result and terminus, as far as we can judge, of physical evolution. The lesson

taught us by every geological museum (for such a museum does but epitomise the earth itself) is but the great law, "first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual." First these rocks and fossils, then thou that passest by and lookest at them. How it grew, how the spiritual, how the soul grew out of the natural, what were the stages and processes by which man has become what he is, God knows, and as yet no one else. We can but say in our ignorance that man became a living soul; we can but say that it was the unseen pre-existing spiritual power of God shaping itself in human form.

Or look at our quiet mother Earth as she basks and spreads herself in the sun in these days of May, and watch how out of her lifeless soil spring the bluebells and anemones. How they grow God knows, and as yet no one else. There is the unfathomable mystery of life; cell added to cell by operation of unseen laws, and through them all running the stream of Life. Here is the great mystery in another guise: first the lifeless earth, then the living organisms—the one the crown of the other. So is it in the greater mystery; the spiritual is the crown of the natural. And I spoke of it as the terminus, for the evolution of man is now no longer a physical struggle for existence, in which physical advantages procure survival: it is a moral evolution; it is will, love, duty, conscience, it is spiritual life that is now determining the progress of men. All nature told St. Paul, and it will tell us, when our eyes are opened, the same tale; it reveals the law and the light that we are groping after. The natural is developing, must develop, into the spiritual; the resurrection of Christ, His spiritual life after His

physical death, was but an incident, a revelation and verification of a universal law, a thing to be expected, an event impossible otherwise.

Or look, St. Paul might tell us, at human society ; the long protracted struggles for the early mastery over nature ; the making of nations, their conflicts and their toil. Look at the vast empires whose armies have perished as flocks of locusts perish—Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Barbarian. Do we predicate individual immortality of these? God knows, who lets not a sparrow fall to the ground without His will ; but the key to the understanding of their place in the economy of the world is St. Paul's great law. Look again at the races of the dark continent ; all the lower races of men. How inexplicable they are to us except on St. Paul's view that they are a stage or step, and we know not what stage or step, in the vast designs of God, the natural preceding the spiritual.

Or, to pass from these wide views, which tax your brain and hearts, and turn to the humble sphere of your own experience. It is the law of your own growth. "First that which is natural"; all that belongs to your bodily nature ; the demands of unconscious infancy, air and food and warmth and the caressing love of a mother ; and then day by day grows out of this the spiritual, the soul with its infinite aspirations. It is a process as familiar to us as the growth of daylight. The spiritual life brightens in you when it is not darkened or marred by the awful distorting powers of evil, it brightens into all the noble qualities of the child and the boy and the man ; into courage and sweetness and manliness and generosity and love, that divine spiritual

gift ; into loyalty to all that is pure and noble, into the grave reverence for God our Father and Christ His Son ; and so the spiritual life, the product and crown of countless ages of the natural, and folded in the child as in a bud, expands and reveals itself as fully formed.

Such a spiritual life does not die. No imagination and no reason can paint in intelligible words that ideal life in a world which is not in space or time, but is, nevertheless, the only reality which we ever see on earth. As the unborn child cannot imagine the light, so we know not what it is to live before God's face for ever, nor what growth in loveliness and goodness is reserved for those who pass early into that heaven of the presence of God. Into that region we cannot follow yet ; but we may trust St. Paul's great law, and be sure that the spiritual shall not fail to follow the natural, with us as it did with our Master, and that

"Death is but the covered way
That leadeth unto Light."

Here on earth we are blind and deaf to revelations of that ideal world—wanting the larger sense ; with no possible channels by which truths or imaginations can pass with accumulated proof from soul to soul ; weakened too in mind, its harmonies disordered by sin and all the dire confusions and clashing discords of earth ; dulled and darkened by this veil of flesh. But when the veil is taken away, and the fuller sense of which we have now only the prophetic foretastes flashes on us, then we shall see all as it really is.

Here is the riddle of the world ; and he who can read it—and surely the increasing light of this age

helps us to read it—he who can read it stands unshaken when public anxieties press, and social ills and national wrongs and dangers are a ceaseless weight and weariness, and when personal sorrows fill his heart, for he knows that all is working up towards the one reality of existence, the far-off divine event, the eternal life, by the one only and divine law of working, “first that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.”

Time is running away, and I have but barely touched even this one truth I want to impress on you, that St. Paul saw, and that we ought to be able to see far more plainly, this profound truth of the natural passing into the spiritual, or as Plato would have expressed it, the *τὰ γινόμενα* into the *τὰ ὄντα*, a unity of nature corresponding to the unity of God. And yet there are two things I have to say, and I will say them briefly.

First, what are we to say of the fact of our Lord's resurrection? Did He rise? or was it all an illusion, and therefore no confirmation at all of the general law above spoken of? On this I can only say that mind after mind, most sceptical by nature, has gone over the evidence, and it stands fast and sure that something happened on that first Easter Day, which we can best describe as the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Few would venture now to define precisely, as is defined in our articles, all that then occurred; or to express it in scientific and materialistic terms. There is a human element in the narrative, and under any circumstances human words must necessarily fail to describe so transcendent a fact. Our pictorial imagination of the event, taken from the literal narrative, may be childishly inade-

quate ; but the underlying fact stands fast which we may well content ourselves in all humility of intellect with describing in the old familiar words of the Creed, "The third day He rose again from the dead." Out of the natural, according to the universal law, He passed through the grave and gate of death to the spiritual life, and in that spiritual life He permitted Himself, by processes we know not, to be recognised and felt as real by His earthly friends. He gave them the proof, and may I not say that He gives to us a proof, less vivid, not less real, by His spiritual presence with us, the proof that the world longed for, that death is not annihilation.

The second thing I have to say is this. Mark how St. Paul closes what I have ventured to call his great hymn to death. Step by step he has risen in that great lyric and reaches that outburst of glorious thankfulness. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And then you might expect that he would have paused in solemn silence. But no—that same conviction of continuity that takes him from earth to heaven brings him back from heaven to earth. Life is one in all its parts, death is but an episode ; and it is as natural to St. Paul to infer from the heavenly what must be the ideal of the earthly life, as it is to see in the earthly the foretaste and foreshadowing of the heavenly. The one is as real to him as the other. And so he closes his lyric with that ever-memorable, that magnificent "*Therefore*": "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

What marvellous words and thoughts are these,

too pregnant perhaps with meaning and wisdom to introduce now, when some of you may be weary of listening, and yet I will ask you to listen yet for a few moments more while I tell you how such a faith as this affects your life. *Therefore*, because spiritual life is continuous, undying; because the pure and sweet and loving and generous soul on earth passes pure and sweet and loving and generous into the light of heaven; because no pains you take for another to check what will stain and mislead and debase, to guide towards what is noble and heavenly and Christ-like; because no self-discipline, no prayer, no falling at the feet of your Father in heaven and listening in silence for His voice, no efforts after the life of brotherliness and the service of your fellows in the spirit of Christ and as stewards of His gifts; because nothing that is good perishes; "forasmuch" —to use St. Paul's own phrase,—"forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," therefore, therefore, "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord."

That work always lies to our hand. "The work of the Lord" is work in the spirit of Christ, and with the aim of Christ. He, living in the constant presence of God and of the eternal world, revealed to men, both by life and death, the significance of the life they now lead, and uplifted the spiritual nature of man by the vast power of His presence. We can but add our tiny efforts in the same cause. If we too live in the presence of God and of the eternal world, we too after our measure shall work in Christ's spirit, wisely, devotedly, serving our fellow-men, even the least of His brethren.

This is the lesson that the ever-recurring prophetic

voice of Death sounds in our ears, sometimes far off, sometimes very near. *Therefore*, it says, *therefore*, because ye and all around you will soon die and pass into the other world; *therefore*, because the natural is passing away and the spiritual is close at hand, "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

XII

JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD¹

“Truly this was the Son of God.”—MATT. xxvii. 54.

THROUGH your Vicar's kindness I am again privileged to speak to you in this church, which will be in the memories of very many of you associated with the name of a near and honoured relative² of my own; one who was largely instrumental in the erection of this church and its schools, and who for many years faithfully preached Christ to you, and that not only in word, but by the witness of a Christian life. He has lately passed away to his rest. As I think of him, I recall the words on the monument erected in Westminster Abbey to the memory of John and Charles Wesley, “God buries His workmen, and carries on His work.” We need not fear that that shall fail.

The last time I preached here I spoke of the witness to Christ of a Christian life. Now, I shall

¹ Preached in St. James's Church, Congleton, on Sunday evening, 12th September 1886.

² The Rev. Jonathan Wilson, Vicar of Long Newton.

NOTE.—It will be recognised that the main thought and many of the expressions in this sermon were taken from a paper by Professor Goldwin Smith.

venture to speak to you of Christ Himself, of "Christ Jesus the Lord," to use the words of St. Paul, which we read in our second lesson this morning.

The words which I have taken as my text were the words of the centurion who witnessed our Lord's death upon the cross. It was he who uttered these words which have become a part of the creed of Christendom. From that day to this it has been a part of the firm and unshaken belief of all Christ's followers that in Christ dwelt the fulness of the Divine nature in bodily form. To St. Paul there was but "one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." The earliest declaration that admitted a convert to baptism was "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The earliest form of the Apostles' Creed was "I believe in God the Father, in His Son Christ, in the Holy Ghost, and in the remission of sins"; and in all the subsequent growth of the Apostles' Creed this is never absent. In east and west, in primitive and mediæval and modern Christianity, woven into the very texture of the Christian faith, is this declaration of the centurion—"Truly this is the Son of God."

There was a time in the third and later centuries, in which the human mind was intensely occupied with the speculative question as to the union of the human and Divine natures in Christ. This question has long ago been abandoned as insoluble; for this plain reason, that we are quite unable to understand our own human nature, and much more, therefore, unable to understand the divine. That Jesus Christ was filled with the Spirit of God, that He was the incarnation of the Divine, is a truth which, like many others, does not contradict, it only transcends our human

capacities. It is not, therefore, on this aspect of the question that I am going to speak to you, but on one which is far more within our reach, and which even the youngest here can partially understand, one, too, which the oldest and wisest will not exhaust—the divineness of the character of Jesus Christ as He appeared as a man among those who saw Him live and saw Him die. I believe that if we could perfectly picture and realise His character as the Son of man there is not one of us, however sceptical, however unimpressionable, who would not exclaim with the centurion, “Truly this is the Son of God”!

We shall, perhaps, best begin to think of Christ's character as a man by thinking what it was not. To describe it in any other way is beyond the power of mortal pen. ■

There were when Christ came (as has been recently pointed out by a great historical writer, Goldwin Smith), three great types of national character in the civilised world—the Jew, the Greek, and the Roman. They were very strongly marked, and very different. To one of these we instantly refer all men of that age of whom we read. How marvellous it will ever be to the thoughtful mind that Christ, who was born in Palestine, of the purest Jewish race, should show no trace of nationality in his character! The founders of all other religions, such as Buddha, or Mahomet, were intensely national, and to their national characteristics they owed their influence. Jesus Christ alone is above all distinctions of race or nation. All can make Him their ideal. He alone stands impartially above all; He alone draws all men unto Him. The Gentiles come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising. One note, one trait

of provinciality, or even of nationality, would have marred the wondrous picture which the evangelists have drawn in their artless memoirs of Christ. He is a unique figure in the portraits of humanity ; man, but not Jew, not Greek, not Roman ; unique as man, because He is more than man.

Again, as He belongs to no one race (as the same writer has pointed out), so He belongs to no one age in the world's history. If He had occupied Himself with the passing political and social questions of His day, we should have felt that He was of the first century, but not of ours, and not of the far future. His teaching was far above all temporary prejudices and peculiarities. It contains the eternal principles by which human life is governed and elevated, applicable then and no less applicable now. It is the leaven that works for ever until the whole is leavened. His teaching is not of time, but of eternity ; and the more deeply we reflect on this, the more convinced we shall be that it is so because it is divine, because all ages are equally present to the eternal God, and to Him only.

So too His teaching on religious questions is uniquely dissevered from the burning controversies of that day. How difficult it is to so dissever religious teaching few perhaps know. The minds of the Jews were in a ferment and fever, not only on the political problems of the day, but even more on its religious disputes. Pharisee and Sadducee, Ritualist and Rationalist, were, even then, in hot and angry controversy ; but it is not the ephemeral transient points in dispute that ever attract our Lord ; it is the broad eternal principles of duty to God and man ; the worship of the one Father, union

with the one Spirit, the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man. Christ, moreover, was not driven into extremes like all other reformers. In his eagerness to expose one error, the human reformer rushes into the opposite. But not so our Lord. His teaching shows the calm, even-handed wisdom of one who was as little a sectarian in religion as He was a political partisan ; who trusts to the still small voice of truth, and knows that at last it will prevail, and that it is the only cure for all the ills of sad and suffering humanity.

Once more, as He belonged exclusively to no nation, to no age, to no party, political or religious, so too He belonged to no class. He was poor ; for what could riches have added to Him ? But He was a prince in His poverty ; it was for our sakes that He became poor. His sympathies were all with the poor and suffering ; and yet there is no trace of narrowness or class feeling ; none of the bitterness of a revolutionist or communist ; none of that limitation of horizon and imperfect sympathy of which we are conscious in all other reformers and enthusiasts for humanity. His perfect sympathy with the weak never made Him unjust to the powerful ; nor in His pity for the poor did He advocate violence against the rich. The evils of society are not to be thus got rid of ; human selfishness is the demon to be cast out, and it is not to be cast out by itself. He was above the temporary and superficial divisions that separate our classes from one another in stupid exclusiveness and jealousy, just as He was above the limits of His nation or His century. And He was above them all because He was Divine, because He was Son of God as well as Son of man.

Again, when men conceive and describe an ideal character, they make that character, in some respect or other, one-sided, according to their own nature or bias. It is a glorification of what they are or of what they would be. It has the distinctive excellencies either of the man of action or the man of thought ; it is the ideal of the man or of the woman, of the hero or the saint, of old or of young ; it is either distinctively great, with the sacrifice of something that is loveable, or it is distinctly loveable, with the sacrifice of something that is great ; or the greatness is marred by some ambition, some fault, some hardness ; or the loveableness is spoilt by some deficiency, some weakness, some aimlessness. But in Christ, as the whole world has acknowledged, has been presented a type of character of which it is impossible to determine whether it most demands our reverence or our love. In Him alone has been united perfect courage and perfect gentleness, in a life of entire devotion to the good of men, crowned by complete self-sacrifice, and yet unmarred by any self-consciousness of heroism, any personal ambition, any trivialities or weaknesses that would spoil the divine and wondrous perfection of the whole. If we look at Christ merely as a human character, through the mist of ages, we may well ask whence had this man this wisdom, this perfection ?

And how short the time, how inadequate the instruments by which He achieved His work. He lived and dwelt among men for the very short space of thirty-three years ; of these His active public life extended only over three. And yet how vast the work He wrought ! What was it that mainly impressed His followers and His own generation ?

Doubtless it was, in part, His miracles of healing, His wonderful control over the spirits and bodies of men, that drew to Him the crowds that followed Him; it was this and their consciousness that there stood One who was more than equal to the gifted prophets of old, and the hope that He might be even the long-promised Messiah. "When He came should He do greater miracles than these?"

But it was Himself far more than His works. For what had He accomplished at His death? A few devoted followers who but imperfectly understood Him—the memory of His life and sayings—the visions of Him after His resurrection—this was all that was externally visible—and what was this to do the work that was straightway begun, and has gone on, and is ever going on, from that day to this? The memory of His mighty deeds was soon effaced or mixed with legends; the direct effect of His personality has in great part passed away from the earth. We almost in vain strive to recall Him as He taught in the temple, speaking as never man spoke, lifting men's souls straight into the presence of His Father. But His work lives. The seed was of Divine origin. The heaven was something different from the lump it leavened. We can see this better than His contemporaries, for we have the witness of history. We can see what a burst of heavenly light broke in on this dark and puzzled world in the teaching of Christ. We can see how it has stood the test of varied time and races and classes and philosophies, and how it alone has absorbed and assimilated all that is best in human nature. We can see that a new spiritual organism then sprang into being; and this far more than compensates for the loss of direct personality.

We have far better reason than any previous age for exclaiming with the centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God"! It was a vision of the ideal of manhood, revealed once for all to men. We can imagine men ignoring it for a time; turning away their faces from it; denying its divinity and its authority; absorbing themselves in business, in gossip, in pleasure, in heaping up wealth, in wild dissipation, or in melancholy, in order to avoid its sight; we can imagine them doing this, for we can see it any day; we can imagine them sinking into ignorance, never even hearing the name of Christ; or straying into sad and weary philosophies that give no hope and no brightness to life, and fail to satisfy even the craving for truth that seems to inspire them. We can imagine all this, and we have seen it. But we cannot imagine, and we have never seen, men superseding this ideal of character by another. It stands alone in unapproachable excellence and sublimity. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved"; and it is this thought that has brought back to Christ many a doubting and alienated intellect.

Do you ask *how* could the Infinite God take human form? How is it possible that Christ should be the Son of God? Truly we know not, any more than we know how the human life or human soul dwells in the material body. What is human life? What is the human soul? and how is it related to the body? What is animal life? What is even vegetable life? When we can answer these questions, then it will be time to pass on to the further question as to the Divine life; and how it could dwell in a human body; and whether it differs in kind or in degree from the

human life. Here in our own bodies resides a life so impalpable, so dependent on those bodies, that a trivial accident, a slip of the foot, a few grains of poison, a mere nervous shock, may destroy that life. In those bodies reside intellectual or imaginative powers by which we can, by a flash of thought, bring before us things past or present, distant or near ; by which we can comprehend all the fancies of men or the facts of nature ; all the worlds of memory and imagination and history and science are open to us ; and we have spiritual power of prayer and meditation by which we touch even God himself. All this we know as familiar knowledge ; and yet who knows how all these powers reside in these bodies of ours ? Here is a mystery neither less nor greater than how Christ was the Son of God. In Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form. He was the perfect Light ; and of Him we are but fragments, broken lights. All the infinite diversities of human character are but the rays of that Divine light shining in the turbid media of our human hearts ; fragments of that Divine light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

I have tried thus to tell you in a few words some of the thoughts which these words of the centurion embody, and to show you how, as we look at the merely human side of our Lord's character, we are compelled by our reason to conclude that He was, as no other man has been, the Son of God ; and yet I have said nothing of His wonderful power over the minds and bodies of men ; nothing of His redeeming and atoning work ; nothing of His stainless purity ; nothing of His power of touching the hearts and souls of His hearers ; nothing of His far-seeing mind, His

courage, His gentleness, and all that makes Him the ideal of mankind. This is an exhaustless theme. I have only spoken of what is perhaps less commonly present to our minds, of what He was *not*, but might have been expected to be had he been merely man. I have reminded you that He was not marked by any of the merely human and transient distinctions of nation, or party, or class, or character, but impartially and serenely above all ; and how He planted the seed of an organism which has grown, and still grows, by the irresistible power of life in itself. You will find here matter for much thought. Such, my friends, as you well know, is our Christian faith, taught Sunday by Sunday, and century by century, in this ancient Church of England.

And now there is only time to add one brief word. If we believe this, and we cannot, I think, help believing all that I have said (and you know that much more might have been said), how profoundly ought such a belief to affect our lives ! It is very good for us to think of Christ as a man, as well as to think of Him as the Son of God ; for by thinking of Him as a man we think of Him as He presented Himself to the world, and learn the lessons His life teaches in the order and in the way He meant us to learn them. It is impossible now to expand this thought, but you may easily follow it out for yourselves. It is by thinking of His sufferings and disappointments as a man that we get the one lasting consolation in our own sorrows. Christ suffered, and it turned out well ; and we may believe that our sorrows will also turn out well. It is the comfort in the death of our dearest friends, and when death draws near to ourselves. Christ died, and His Spirit yet lives—nay, He Himself lives

for ever. Death was no evil to Him, neither shall it be an evil for those who live in His Spirit, even though, as He tells us in His last parable, they knew Him not.

And it is by thinking of His limitations as a man that we get patience with the selfishnesses, the unhappinesses, and the terribly slow progress of good in the world. Why did not the Son of God, we feel inclined to say, why did not the Son of God come and turn the world upside down, and at one stroke make the crooked straight and the rough places plain, and make all men good and happy? It is because He came only as the Son of man, to work all reforms from within, by the slow action on human character. It will be a blessed thing for our country when we all realise this. I can fancy the hearts of the whole nation awakened to this truth that it is only by living in His Spirit, and by transmitting that Spirit by example and by teaching to our children, that we can ever hope for the kingdom of God on earth.

It is well to think of Him as our Saviour from sin, and with whom we may rest in the life after death, but it is even more to recognise Him as our Leader in this world against all the hosts of evil, and as the type of perfect manhood, to which all nations, all ages, all ranks, all classes, should try to conform themselves. There is a fine saying of Luther, which you will like to hear. "I repeat this," he said, "and I will say it yet again, whosoever would lift up his mind to a thought of God, a salutary outlook upon Him, must subordinate all things to the humanity of Christ. Let him always keep Christ in view, whether in His life or in His sufferings, until his own heart grows tender at the sight. Then he will not stop

there ; his thoughts will lead him further on." Yes, it will lead you further on. I believe that no one studies Christ as the Son of man without becoming filled with reverence and love for Him, and reverence and love grow into worship, and we exclaim at last with the centurion, "Truly this man was the Son of God," and then we submit our hearts and wills and our whole life to His Divine will, and find that peace which passes all understanding. We shall see (as we heard in the second lesson of this morning) "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

May I yet add one final word? This belief in Jesus Christ as the first fruits of a Divine humanity, such as we ourselves are, yet without sin, fills us with boundless hopefulness for the world, with toleration for others, with charity for all. We cannot despair of a human nature which Christ shared. None may be despaired of ; for all are the brethren of Christ. Here is the true fount of the ever-flowing stream of Christian charity. And this belief gives us self-respect as well as hopefulness. As we cannot despair of others, so we cannot despair of ourselves. Whatever are our weaknesses or our sins, we share the human nature which Christ glorified. It is this thought which gives us that spring of joyful and bounding emotion, that sustained cheerfulness and confidence in God's everlasting love, which carries us through all times of sorrow and depression, and over all impediments of faithlessness and dulness, till we come to that eternal world where we shall see Him on whom our thoughts have so often dwelt—Christ, the Son of man and the Son of God.

XIII

THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH LIFE DURING THE LAST TWENTY- FIVE YEARS.¹

IT is of course an unusual occurrence that a minister of the Church of England should deliver an address in a Congregational chapel. And I think it may be best to preface my remarks this evening by saying a few words upon the reasons which have led Mr. Thomas to invite me, and have led me to accept his invitation. It is a very simple explanation. It is because we are both convinced, and I know that many Churchmen, and I trust that many Nonconformists are equally convinced, that the right relations between the Church of England and the Nonconformist bodies are those of friendliness and hearty co-operation, and not of aloofness, still less of disparagement or hostility. My being here must not be understood to imply the slightest wavering in Mr. Thomas's principles or in mine. It is possible to combine a wide divergence of opinion on secondary matters with an earnest unanimity in primary

¹ A lecture, given in the Redland Park Congregational Chapel, Bristol, 29th September 1886.

matters. I hold that episcopacy is a form of Church government which has high Scriptural and primitive testimony in its favour, and has been proved by experience to have been suited to its work. I hold that the parochial system under an episcopal government has been the best method ever devised for the education of a whole nation in Christianity. I hold that an Establishment—though not our present Establishment, unmodified and unextended—and religious endowments have been and are very desirable for a Church that is charged permanently with the religious teaching of a whole nation, and is not only concerned with the spiritual edification of its own voluntary members. But it seems to be God's will, to speak with all reverence, and to be a result of deep-seated historical causes, that there should for the present exist, side by side, different associations which hold the negatives of all these propositions, and yet work effectually within their limited lines in spreading the faith and spirit of Christ. And, therefore, I cannot but believe that if Christ could stand among us He would say that nothing should separate us from one another which does not separate us from Him.

If I were addressing Nonconformists only, this is all I need say. But one¹ for whose goodness I entertain great respect, while not denying the legality of my action, about which I consulted him, has asked me "whether my addressing you to-night may not be deemed to involve some measure of overt spiritual communion with that which in our Litany we disavow and deprecate—in a word, whether toleration, ever rightful and commendable, may not be regarded as

¹ The Lord Bishop of the diocese.

having fringed off into formal approval and sympathy." My reply is that "it may be so deemed," and "may be so regarded," but from what I believe is a mistake as to the essence of schism. When I pray in the Litany to be delivered from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, I pray to be saved from holding unworthy views of Christ or His Church, and to be saved from that spirit of faction and sectarianism and party which so terribly spoils the Christian life. I pray that this spirit of party may never again so infect our Church as to make us split into sections, each existing to proclaim their own opinions. But when in God's providence we have been and are split into sections, what is the right attitude? It is certain, if anything is certain, that neither argument nor compulsion can produce unanimity. Let us try the more excellent way. When the Samaritans invited our Lord "He abode with them two days." Let us also try whether the spirit of aloofness and hostility, that is, the *spirit* of schism, cannot be got rid of, and thus the evil of separate organisations minimised. You are members, as we are, of the body of Christ; and in that body there should be no quarrel; all should be peace and harmony. If separate organisation does not separate you from Christ, it cannot separate you from us. In coming to speak to you I am acting wholly in the spirit of our Church's prayer against schism.

The subject on which I have been invited to speak is "The progress of Christian Church life during the last twenty-five years." By Church life we mean something different from individual Christian life. Could we venture to speak of the progress during the last twenty-five years of individual Christian life?

Is the type of the Christian man or woman finer than it was a generation ago? Are we better than our fathers? I think not. It seems to me as I recall the sweet lives I have known, lives now hid with Christ in God, that they attained a holiness and rest and purity, a calm, unagitated, undoubting trust, a conscious repose in God, that is not given to many men now. I do not see any one now like my father; and there are others among us who would say the same of their fathers. It is not merely filial piety and reverence for age that makes men say so. It corresponds to a real difference. The ideal of life set before men by religious biographies and otherwise—I can well recall it—was to *have experiences*: it was to be “an eminent Christian”; and to be an eminent Christian meant a life of much retirement, much introspection, and conscious spiritual experiences. The type has perhaps somewhat changed. Our generation desires less self-consciousness, more work for others. W. Wilberforce used to be warned that he was imperilling his own soul by so devoting himself to his cause. No one would now so warn Ellice Hopkins.

This change in the ideal of individual life is the key to the progress in Church life. There is a greater activity in almost every religious community taken separately; certainly in the Church of England there is more consciousness of joint relations to the world outside. It almost amounts to a new sense, this feeling of the public conscience that every member of a religious community should be doing something for others. Not that it was not preached before, or recognised as a duty. No one ever put it better than Bishop Butler, the great Bishop of Bristol,

when he said that "No one has a right to be called a Christian who does not do somewhat in his station towards the discharge of this trust." But it is the more general realisation in our congregations of the *trusteeship* of wealth, knowledge, influence, life itself, that is a chief element in the progress of the last quarter of a century. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this sign of progress. For, in the first place, the corporate vitality, the interest of all in what is the very aim and end of their association as a body, the education of mankind in the faith and spirit of Christ, is the only guarantee that that end will be attained. And that is not all. It is a movement that is full of hope for the future of England. No one can mistake the progress in politics towards the people's taking a greater share in control and administration. The fact, therefore, that all the members of a congregation are taking more interest and not less in the religious work of that congregation is an augury that no one can overlook that a democratic spirit is not necessarily hostile to religion. Religion may get fresh life from the democratic spirit within the congregation. It is, moreover, the test which Christ Himself appealed to as a witness to His own Divine mission. When the disciples of John asked Him whether He was the Christ, or should they look for another, what was His answer? He let them see His works, and then bade them go and tell John what they had seen, "how the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." The test of Christ's presence in a congregation is the work they do for Christ. To do more work for others is therefore

true progress. The last twenty-five years have seen great progress.

If I were asked to name special points in which this progress is shown, I should mention missionary work first. The whole attitude of England towards mission work is more steady and hopeful than it was. The London Missionary Society, which you so largely support, is doing great work. So are the great Church societies. The work is still somewhat disorganised and unconnected, but it is pioneering, and in time it will produce vast effects. It took centuries to Christianise Europe imperfectly. It may well take centuries to Christianise Asia and Africa.

Home missions are another point in which great progress is shown. It is now a usual thing for a rich congregation to affiliate some poorer district, and do something for its welfare by its care and love and gifts. Something, alas, all too little, of the primitive fire of love and brotherhood is being kindled in our hearts, something of the yearning desire to "comfort one another," which breathes through St. Paul, is being shown. At any rate, it is a recognised duty of a congregation. And the range of interest is very wide. It is not only in directly religious teaching, but in the not less necessary work of preparing the soil for the seed to grow ; in work for education, temperance, recreation ; in art, in gardening, in home industries and economies ; in all that makes home and family life more attractive and safe. And we are beginning to feel that all these duties of a brotherhood cannot be discharged wholly by money payment. We are beginning to feel that God demands personal service.

Again, I think we are less censorious than we

were. There is a spirit of greater toleration. God bears with other folk, and so may we. We are beginning to see that exclusiveness in religion is not a virtue. "It takes all sorts," as has been said, "to make a world ;" and there is therefore room for "all sorts" in a Church now as in the days of the Corinthian Church. But how narrow we still are.

I am speaking very briefly, but among the signs of progress I think we may mention the increased sense of responsibility for the young ; the awakening of our conscience to the immense importance of their upbringing in temperance and purity.

I have left to the last any mention of the material progress of our separate religious communities. I have no details at hand to show the vast sums which the Church of England has spent in the last quarter of a century on those noble edifices which she holds in trust for the nation, our cathedrals and parish churches ; nor can I state what she has raised in voluntary contributions for new churches and endowments to meet the wants of new districts. This is not the place for statistics. But the sums are very large ; and Bristol has before its eyes specimens of what has been done all over England in the nave of our cathedral, and in the new churches which have been lately built for our poorer city districts and endowed by voluntary contributions of rich and poor. I believe that among you also it has been a time of great material progress, and of liberal contributions.

I have hitherto spoken only of the nature of the progress visible in all our religious communities as far as I know, when regarded separately. But a change no less marked, and no less hopeful, has come over their relations to one another. We need

not look outside Bristol for illustrations of this change, and I have no reason for thinking Bristol exceptional unless indeed we are exceptionally fortunate in the leaders of the churches in Bristol. My own experience does not range over more than seven years in Bristol ; but during that short period we have seen what could scarcely have been seen twenty-five years before. We have seen a deputation of Churchmen, with a dean and a canon at their head, bidding welcome to the Congregational Union in the old historic Broadmead Chapel. We have seen our honoured Bishop presiding over a committee of Churchmen and Nonconformists inquiring into the condition of the poor in Bristol. We have seen the leading Nonconformist ministers present and speaking at the laying of the memorial stone of one of our new parish churches ; and we have seen a meeting of some of the leaders of Church and Nonconformity to discuss the right relations that should exist among them. We have seen a wave of discussion about disestablishment and disendowment pass over Bristol, and leave its peace undisturbed. Your leaders and ours kept silence, even under the provocation of a few unwise speeches, and their silence won universal respect. All these signs are signs of real progress towards a unity—not unity in externals, which may come never in this world, but towards a far higher unity that men are everywhere feeling for—the unity of spirit and of love, the unity of a true Catholic Church of which we are all members.

And these are hopeful signs for our future. There is a great problem before our country, the problem of defining the position to be held by the various

Christian bodies with relation to the State and to one another. It is of supreme importance to the future of the nation that this problem should be approached by all members of the Church of Christ in a spirit worthy of that Church of Christ, and not in that of a mere party warfare. It is of supreme importance that the temper in which we proceed to formulate the changes desirable should be one of mutual respect and forbearance in Christian charity. Let us dispense with professional gladiators on both sides. Let us, like the duellists, agree each to shoot his own second, who is driving us to fight. Judah and Israel must settle their relations without calling in the Assyrians. You may rely on it that Assyria is ready. Athens and Thebes must unite in fear of Philip. If we cannot read the lesson that history teaches us of the woful effects of the sectarian spirit, then the next half-century will be one, not of progress, but first of heated antagonism and disorder, and then of disgrace, and ultimately of a vast population neglected. We may weaken ourselves to a mere shadow by fratricidal conflict, and leave a field clear for Rome and materialism to fight out their awful battle. It is in the fact that the temper in which we are beginning to approach this question is improving that I see the chief progress in the last twenty-five years. If this progress is uninterrupted and accelerated, if we religious bodies can approach one another in a true spirit of Christian love and charity before the crisis is precipitated, then there is hope that the result may not be unworthy of a Christian Church and nation. Time is on the side of both of us, if we make right use of time, as I believe we shall do.

But we perhaps get a truer estimate of the direction of progress if we look over a longer period than twenty-five years. Progress is a highly complex result. It is as if we looked down from a height on some crowd finding their way through an unexplored land. Some find their way straight on, guided by a divine instinct ; others diverge right and left and are slowly taught that there is no road there ; others stand still ; and not a few are going back in despair of any goal or any promised land at all. Still, on the whole, the crowd moves on. Or, to take another illustration : if you watch the waves on the shore, you see them rise and fall, and you cannot say whether there is any permanent effect, whether there is any real rise of tide or not. But watch the waves for a whole hour, and then you cannot fail to see whether the tide is rising or falling. There are not only waves, but a tide. Look for a short period at the history of religious thought, and we see little but divergent opinions and controversies and doubts, we see nothing but waves ; but watch the long course of history and we see the power and progress and increasing grasp of religion among men. We see the incoming tide. We see that controversies and divisions always meant that some ideal was being temporarily obscured, and in our imperfect condition could only thus be preserved by some protest that involved separation for a time ; we see that evil has often been overruled for good, and that order and truth have resulted from what seemed disorder, and was denounced as falsehood. God's ways are not as man's ways, and we must study them with the profoundest humility.

Let us glance back five hundred years, and see

England as she was then. It was a time of darkness. It was the age of persecution of the Lollards. There was no religious liberty; the nation was not fit for it. There was no open Bible. The nation was still, and we can see that it was expedient she should be still, under that stern schoolmaster, the law of the Church, that was to bring them to Christ; that law that had tamed or was taming the fierce nations of the west who had overthrown the Roman Empire. Which of us will say that God should have dealt otherwise with our country?

Look on fifty years. We see Lollardism growing; Wycliffe's Bible creeping about from house to house, preparing materials for the Reformation. But we see an Act passed which imposed forfeiture of goods or land or life on any one who read his Bible in English. The age of liberty was not yet possible. Liberty would have meant licence and confusion.

Let us shift the slide once more, and look at England four hundred years ago. It brings us to 1480. It brings us to one of the darkest periods in English religious history, judging by the surface only; a period of ignorance, superstition, and brutality; yet there were noble souls in those days, and there was an under-current, which has never been wanting to our English race, of a longing for spiritual life. It was, at least, the age that built some of our noblest churches, and it was the age that made the fathers and mothers, or the grandfathers and grandmothers, of our Reformers. Somewhere below the surface there has been movement and growth.

Fifty years more and we see the Reformation well begun. It is exactly three hundred and fifty years since Coverdale's Bible was printed and ordered to be

set up in all parish churches. Think what an advance this means. Still, religious liberty was not understood and was not possible ; it was only the exchange of one stern master for another. And even the gain seems lost in the reign of Mary, who showed what are the tender mercies of Rome ; the reign stained by the martyrdoms of Ridley, Cranmer, Hooper, Latimer, and hundreds more. Bristol then saw sights where Highbury Chapel now stands—sights which she will never see again. The tide had risen. The conscience of the nation was shocked. The freedom, once won, will never be lost.

But look on fifty years more, to that most difficult and entangled period of our Church's history. We see England free from Rome ; but the only conception of a Church three hundred years ago, held universally, was still that of a stereotyped institution ; it was believed that force or argument could ensure uniformity, and that uniformity was the only legitimate aim. *Compelle intrare* is still the motto on all sides. No doubt the disorder and irregularity and ignorance were great, and this conception of the Church, deeply ingrained in the people, and enforced by the strong hand of Elizabeth, was a "taming process." England was still not fit for religious liberty ; indeed, few even dreamt of it ; the only question was *what* should be enforced.

How impossible religious liberty was in the then temper of the nation we can judge from our next glance at the state of the English people. We see in Massachusetts an organised religious persecution under the Puritans, showing how totally unknown was religious liberty even to those who seemed to demand it. And in England we see Laud ; and

then we see the terrible Presbyterian reaction. We see the use of our Prayer-book forbidden under pain of fine or imprisonment. Religious liberty was just as little within the grasp of one party as of the other. The tyranny of Presbyterianism was at least as stern and unrelenting as that of Rome.

Then came the Restoration ; the joy at the escape from confusion and irreverence and tyranny ; but alas, there came retaliation too, and the misuse of power by the dominant party. Indeed, almost the whole nation joined in the reaction against Puritanism. The time of liberty was not yet come. But it was not the bishops, not the Church, it was the people in Parliament, that compelled Charles to withdraw his declaration that would have given greater liberty. Never let it be thought that intolerance was all on one side. It was in the whole temper of the nation. The strong were intolerant of the weak,—whoever happened to be strong. That most difficult problem, to be tolerant, and yet not indifferent ; to hate schism in Christians, and yet not hate Christians in schism ; this was not even dreamt of by the mass of the people. The strong thought they did God service in persecuting the weak. Look at the persecution of George Fox ; look at the *Records of the Friends in Bristol*. Four thousand Friends were in prison in 1660, immediately on the close of the reign of Presbyterianism ; 190 were in prison in Bristol alone. Read of the loathsome dungeons ; the confinement in stocks all through the freezing winter nights ; read it in detail ; read how Caton and Stubbs “were desperately whipped till bystanders wept at the sight ; and how they were sent out of Bristol with constables to whom their

heavenly image and sober lives and words preached so movingly that they finally suffered them to travel alone whither they would." It will seem as if there had been no tide. And yet all this was far better than it was a century before. When John Ewins, the pastor of Broadmead, strained his voice in a Bristol prison "to the people that gathered together under the prison walls to hear, he being about four pair of stairs higher from them," he was at any rate better treated than Tyndale or Frith. The tide had risen. The clock had moved on.

Now, what is the moral of this very brief and slight retrospect, this mere turning over the pages of history? It teaches us that *God works slowly by the one means of affecting human character*. There is no other way. You remember that Owen and Baxter, two of your great writers, are contrasted somewhere, —I think in Orme's life. "Owen expected to unite all hearts by attacking all understandings." "Baxter," he tells us, "trusted more to the gradual operation of Christian feeling by which alone he believed that extended unity could finally be effected." And Baxter was right. The last two centuries, and notably the last quarter of a century, have witnessed "the gradual operation of Christian feeling." Progress will not be effected by heroic remedies, by revolutions, and counter-revolutions. Progress will come from love, patience, and wisdom, which, as George Fox tells us, "will wear out all which is not of God." How much of your beliefs and traditions, or of mine, are not of God we know not. And therefore let us all the more aim at "love, patience, and wisdom," and "the operation of Christian feeling." There is no other way.

There is one very important aspect of progress

during this whole period, and especially during the last twenty-five years, which I have not yet touched on. It is very important, but very difficult to deal with briefly. Let us ask ourselves what is the cause of this progress ; or rather, as we know nothing of ultimate causes, and can only in general words say that this development is the result of the will of God—let us ask ourselves with what change in philosophy or theology is this change in conduct linked ? We are a more tolerant nation, more sympathetic, less persecuting than we were. From what change in principle does it flow ? Is there a corresponding change in our national point of view of the relation of man and God, and of the nature of the Church ? Is there a change in our theology ? It is obvious that we are touching here on a vast question—the development of Christian doctrine and its connection with Christian progress. I can only make one or two remarks, which may, perhaps, stimulate some of you to study this question a little further. It is one of great importance.

I daresay it is a familiar remark that you do not hear preached to educated congregations, as often as they used to be preached, certain well-known doctrines—such as the total depravity of man, the everlasting torment of the lost, the vicarious sufferings of Christ, and what used to be called the scheme of salvation. Instead of those we hear more of the Incarnation as in itself the reconciliation of man to God ; more of the indwelling Spirit of God ; more of the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man ; more of life in the Spirit of Christ ; more of the duties of a Christian community. Anglicanism, too, and Puritanism have lost something of their exclusiveness. We see that the

Catholic Church has many members. Is this also a sign of progress, or is it degeneracy? Are we departing from, or getting nearer to, the purity of the Gospel in theology and in views of the Church?

The answer cannot be given without an extensive survey of the history of development of doctrine, that we may see the whole change, of which this change is only a part. I can only of course give you a brief summary of the result. It is plain that we are witnessing a continuance of the slow process of modifying that Augustinian theology which, under God's providence, dominated the western world for more than a thousand years, and from some peculiarities of which ever since the Reformation, and still more during the last twenty-five years, the English nation has been, with some reactions, setting itself free. His stern uncompromising dogmas about God, unknown to the earlier Church, his theory of a Church and all the corollaries that flowed from it, undreamt of by the Apostles, were perhaps necessary in order to create such an engine as the Papacy. And the Papacy itself was necessary in view of the tremendous work it had to accomplish, to replace the falling Roman Empire, to weld together and train the fierce nations of Europe, to create an implicit faith which should be a barrier which even the fanaticism of Mahometanism could not break down. This Augustinian doctrine and system has profoundly affected all Christianity — Anglicanism and Puritanism not less than the Roman Church. We still read the Bible through the glasses of Augustine.

But a system of dogmas suited to a dark age of ignorance and wild licence, and perhaps suited still

to certain nations, and certain conditions of a nation, is less suited to our condition than the more spiritual, more primitive, less legal, less repellent theology of the earlier and more enlightened Greek Church, and it is to that we are insensibly going back. Augustine was the Moses of the west, the stern law-giver, the schoolmaster that brought to Christ the races under Roman sway; and now we are being emancipated from that law and coming to Christ Himself. This, if you will believe me, is the real tidal progress of our age, part of a continuous emancipation of the western mind from lower views of God, of salvation, and of the Church; part of a recurrence to a more scriptural, apostolic, and primitive theology and ecclesiology. We are going behind the Augustinian system. It is from this change, more than from anything else, that flows the increased Church life. It is producing a true catholicity, the outlines of which it is still perhaps impossible to define; it is making persecution impossible instead of a duty; it is altering our view of schism by recurring to the moderate Greek way of regarding as part of the Divine will the national and other differences of custom and opinion and organisation; of seeing unity in the spirit of Christ, not in administration nor in formulated creed.

But I have spoken already, I fear, at excessive length, though I have touched each point with extreme brevity; and I will conclude with one more remark. This examination of the progress of Christian Church life during the past twenty-five years imposes on us all a very serious duty. It is our duty to ascertain by impartial historic retrospect—and this means reading histories written from many

points of view—it is our duty to ascertain what the nature of such progress is, and with what change of theologic opinion it is associated. The need of students, first hand, second hand, third hand, is greater than ever it was ; and then it is our duty to aim at furthering such progress ; not by violent revolution to anticipate its conjectured goal, but to saturate ourselves with the best spirit, and thus steadily to co-operate with what, after fullest thought, we believe to be the will of God as revealed in human history. It is in this philosophic and devout and humble frame of mind that we should approach such great questions as now impend over us—the relation of Christianity to the Churches, and of Christianity to the masses.

It would lead me into matter that might be deemed irrelevant or controversial if I defined more closely the problem of the relations of Christianity to the Churches, or used this opportunity of expressing my own opinions on it. It would be an unfair use of the position in which your kindness has placed me to-night. But I may say one word on the other question. Remember that we and you still are a *missionary* Church. We were so, of course, when Augustine of Canterbury landed, and no date can be assigned at which the Church—the association of those who believe in Christ and worship Him—became co-extensive with the nation and finished their work. We are still a missionary Church ; we hold our endowments on this trust that we are to use them for teaching Christ to the whole people. In this sense only are we a national Church. It is possible in England, as in France, that the majority of the people may say, “We had rather

have the endowments than the teaching, and confiscate them all. And Parliament is supreme." Would it be just or expedient to do so? It would be a national crime. It cannot be left to a bare majority at the hustings of an imperfectly Christianised nation to decide whether the mission work of the Church shall go on ; to say whether it shall be crippled. It cannot be left to the untaught to say whether they shall be taught Christianity, and what Christianity they shall be taught. The problem is surely not so simple as this.

We have a fearful responsibility, and you cannot help sharing it with us. It is, indeed, "a stewardship that we are entrusted with," and you are our fellow-stewards inasmuch as you are our fellow-Christians. The problem before you and ourselves is how to train up the children streaming into England in the faith and fear of God, and make them Christian men and women. To us as Christians this problem is infinitely more pressing than all others. I grudge all that distracts us from it. Those who do not approach it as Christians seem to me to have simply no voice in the matter as long as we do not tyrannise over them. In face of this tremendous question let us sink all minor differences ; let us meet with every desire to make concession, to find common ground, to remove all that jars ; but with the absolute resolve that the people for whom we hold the trust shall not suffer. It is towards this blessed goal of co-operation and mutual confidence that the last twenty-five years has seen progress made. This is the spirit in which I am here to-night ; and this is the direction, my friends, in which we must go on, and in which we may humbly look for God's blessing.

If, therefore, your heart is set on the one supreme aim that every Church must set before itself, to advance the kingdom of Christ, make these principles your own. First of all, to give your own heart in all humility and sincerity to the service of Christ. Next, to be unsparing of time and thought and prayer and wealth for the home and foreign mission work undertaken by your congregation, and especially work for the young. Next, silence in yourselves, and by your stern disapproval silence in others, the spirit of censoriousness. Remember Cromwell's advice to a body of Presbyterian deputies: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God," he said, "to remember that it is possible that you may sometimes be mistaken." Next, prepare for a more liberal theology, a more fearless criticism of the Bible, a braver recognition of the results of learning and science. Much of what may strike you as new is very old. Progress is partly discovery and partly re-discovery. Do not in ignorance and intolerance condemn all that seems new. Lastly, endeavour to heal the schism in the greater Church of England of which you are members, by cultivating brotherliness in spirit and word and deed towards all members of that greater Church, however hard this may be. "Love, patience, and wisdom wear out all that is not of God." Let me therefore earnestly press on you to add to your prayers the prayer for unity in our Prayer-book. In it we pray, not for unity of administration, but for unity of spirit. Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians may all join with us in this prayer, and yet think it perfectly right to remain in the calling wherein they were called. In it we pray for spiritual gifts alone, spiritual gifts, which, if

God shall grant them in answer to our prayers, shall transform the Church of Christ in our land into a harmonious brotherhood. "O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace, give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord : that as there is but one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

XIV

SUPERSTITION¹

“They had certain questions against Paul of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”—ACTS xxv. 19.

HERE Christianity is summarily disposed of by Festus as a superstition. This is a word we are quite familiar with; we know, in a vague sort of way, what we mean when we speak of a practice or a belief as superstition, and it somewhat startles us to see Christianity itself dismissed by the scornful Roman as a superstition. I think it will be very useful for you to consider this matter, to try and think out what the essence of superstition is; what is the right attitude when we are brought in contact with superstitious beliefs in others; what is the cure for superstition in ourselves; and why we believe that Christianity, rightly apprehended, is not superstitious. I need scarcely say that in one sermon it is possible only to touch these great and deep questions; but perhaps what I say will help you to form principles and lines of thought, and, at any rate, to begin to think distinctly on the matter.

¹ Preached in Clifton College Chapel on Sunday, 17th October 1886.

The essence of superstition is the having low views of God when it is possible to have higher ; in the presence of the higher to maintain the lower. It was, for example, superstition among the Jews in the form of idolatry that was forbidden in the second commandment. By that commandment the Jews were forbidden to make any graven image to represent God. And the reason was that the representation of God under human or animal forms was found to debase and degrade their conceptions of God.

The second commandment is to us also a command ; but it is a spiritual command. We must study its spirit, not its letter ; and its spirit is : Thou shalt not entertain low views of God. We break it when we attribute to God the limitations or imperfections of human nature, whether those limitations or imperfections be spiritual or bodily. It was superstition in the Pharisees when they thought that God connived at their evasion of actual duties because they kept the letter of some human ordinances ; when they substituted ritual for deeds of purity and kindness ; when they were unjust and cruel under the name of religion. This was superstition, because it meant that their views of God were still so low that they thought it pleased Him that they should worship Him in this way. They thought that God was even such an one as themselves.

It was superstition in England that led men, less than two centuries ago, to believe in witchcraft, and to burn and torture poor women with almost incredible tortures, and believe all the while that they were doing God's service. It all arose from their low views of God. They believed that certain of their

fellow-creatures were possessed by evil spirits, and were doomed by God to eternal and excruciating agonies, and, therefore, intent on this belief, they could regard with indifference the tortures which lasted but for a few hours at most, and, at any rate, vindicated their own zeal for God.

I said that the essence of superstition was the having low views of God, *when it was possible to have higher*. It was possible to the Jews; for the conception of an invisible deity, whose service lay in obedience and goodness and justice, was revealed to them through Moses, and Samuel, and the prophets, again and again; it was, indeed, the perpetual revelation, and was existing side by side with the lower view. It was possible to the Pharisees; they blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts when Moses and the prophets were read, and even when Christ Himself spake to them of His Father, and showed them the excellence of brotherhood and love. They chose darkness rather than light. It was possible to the English of the seventeenth century; conscience was not silent; these cruelties did not pass unrebuked; they had their Bibles, moreover, and the spirit of Christianity, if not always the letter of the Bible, was wholly adverse to such cruelty. It was not from zeal to God so much as from fear and cruelty, which they excused under the cloak of religion, that they committed those crimes.

In our own day, also, we can see that Christianity in some of its forms has its superstitions. Not to speak of our own country, we know that if any of us were to go into churches in Italy or Spain, and see advertised on the doors the sale of masses to buy souls out of purgatory, or watch other parts of their

service, we should probably say that their beliefs and their practices were superstitious. But what should we mean? We should mean that they would be superstition *in us*, because for us to believe in what they teach would involve a lower belief in God than that which we have inherited and been taught. We could not persuade ourselves, except by wilful self-delusion, that a mass offered and paid for on earth could alter what was best for one who was departed. And we believe that God's judgment is *best*, and that punishment—if that word best describes the disciplinary love of God continued to us in the future world—that punishment is remedial and merciful, not vindictive and retaliatory.

We know, then, that such beliefs in us would be superstitious; but they are not necessarily so in the peasants of Italy or Spain. In them it is a lower form of religious belief, adapted by God's Providence to their religious condition; and on them higher thoughts of God have not yet dawned. Now, when we read of superstition in the past, and see it in others in the present, we are driven to ask—are we then alone, our favoured age and country alone, free from superstition? Remember what superstition is. It is the wilfully retaining lower views of God when higher views are open to us. Are we then free? And the answer must be that we are not free, unless we do our utmost to purify and raise our conceptions of God as He is revealed to us in all ways, and especially by Christ and in Christ; and unless we subordinate willingly our prejudices and preconceptions and the teaching of human authority to this belief, purified, and ennobled, and enlightened by all the means in our power. The truth is, that it is a

perpetual struggle to get rid of superstition. The intellectual struggle of the religious life is the effort to raise our beliefs, without making any fatal breach or discontinuity, to the level of our ever-rising mental conceptions of God. Any belief that represents God to us as capricious or unjust, as preferring external service to the true service of a pure and loving heart and liberal hand, that puts the letter above the spirit, the form above the reality ; that puts the Church on the same level as Christ, and human regulations anywhere on the same level with the golden rules of love to God and man, will lead to superstition ; for our conscience does tell us that these views must have in them something wrong, and therefore we must ceaselessly strive to purify our beliefs. Such, then, is the essence of superstition—it is maintaining, in the face of light, low views of God.

What is the evil of it? The evil of a low conception of God is, perhaps, the most subtle and irreparable that can befall the human spirit. Our conception of God moulds our ideal of life. Such as we think God to be, such we tend to become. "They that make them are like unto them" was said of idols and idolmakers, and it is true of all conceptions of God. It is a law of human nature. It was precisely because men thought that God took pleasure in torturing men for false beliefs after they were dead that they themselves took pleasure in torturing them while they were alive. That Calvin should have condemned Servetus to the stake, that Cranmer should have signed the death warrant of Frith, are but memorable examples of the evil of holding unworthy views of God.

Such views penetrate the whole nature ; they

prevent or distort its growth. No greater boon can be given to a nation or an individual than the exaltation of their conception of God. This is, indeed, the work of the Gospel itself. This was the work of the Christian missionaries to England thirteen centuries ago, and is the work of our missionaries now ; and as the ideal rises, so with it rises the whole standard of conduct and the aim of life.

From the fact that higher and lower views of God subsist side by side in a society or country, it becomes a question of constant and pressing interest, what is the right attitude in presence of what seems superstition in others? The golden rule, the one absolute, supreme rule, is, of course, charity—a tender, sympathetic, brotherly love, neither indifference nor contempt ; the desire to raise him, and yet the resolve that while 'the world standeth we will not make our brother to offend.

With such charity and sympathy as guide we cannot go far wrong.

But some one says : "Truth is a paramount duty ; you are bound to speak the truth, and leave the result with God." Is it so? Would it be right in a Roman Catholic country for you to tell the simple peasants that they were wasting their money and their time in buying masses? Or would it be right in the man, in his conceit of superior wisdom, to tell the child that his thoughts of God were superstition? Certainly not. Some of you will recall the well-known words of *In Memoriam* :—

" Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early heaven, her happy views ;
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days."

O

Or you may recall the indignant remonstrance of Ezekiel with those who tampered with the faith of the simple: "Seemeth it a small thing to eat of the good pastures, and to drink of the deep water, and to foul the residue with your feet?" This is to kick down the ladder by which you yourself have climbed up. For what is superstition in one or at one time is not superstition in another or at another time. The form which religious belief takes is relative to knowledge and illumination.

And you cannot convey knowledge or light by a negation or a sneer. Knowledge can only be given by sympathy and love, and by information and light given at the right moment. Your duty is not to break up the beliefs of others because in you such beliefs would *now* be superstitious. You must bear with them, however irritating they may be, and look at your own faith to see whether you have the belief of which their superstition is the imperfect expression, and then do your utmost to elevate your own thoughts, and, it may be, the thoughts of others, about God, and then superstition gently vanishes as the shades of night vanish before the dawn.

Nothing, you may rely on it, is, as the phrase runs, a "mere superstition." To every lower belief corresponds a higher and truer belief, of which the superstition is the inadequate and approximate expression. They are related as are shadow and substance. There is no such thing as a "mere superstition." To every "superstitio" there exists, if I may coin the word, a "substitutio." Cling to the "super" till you have grasped the "sub." Maintain the old expression, not only from charity to others, but as the best key to the inner truth, and let your deepen-

ing faith and your wider views of God, as they grow, make you more reverent than others, and not less reverent. Indeed, if your views are wider and deeper and truer, instead of shallower and less true, they will of necessity make you more reverent.

In one thing only you may not conform to superstition, and that is when it requires something that is hard and cruel and unfeeling ; then it is in conflict with the secret verdict of your conscience, and it must give way. Also you must never make a matter of conscience of some trifling practice or belief which you begin to suspect may be a superstition. I will give no examples. You must learn in these matters to apply principles.

The Christian faith is one that may be held by the heart and intellect of all men, from the simplest peasant to the profoundest philosopher. The expression of it will vary according to the mental calibre and knowledge of the individual. But an inadequate expression—and all expressions are inadequate—is not a superstition.

Then only does it become a superstition when the mind has outgrown the expression, and, failing to grasp satisfactorily the inner truth, and fearing to abandon what has some truth in it, that expression is hardened and materialised against the secret warning of conscience and the light of truth, and often even the plain principles of Christianity and the golden rule of charity. As it is, the Christian faith covers the whole range of human intellect ; the child who only knows that Christ died for him on Calvary, and hence loves God, and tries to please Him, that he may be indeed God's child, here and hereafter ; and the philosophic historian who sees in

the wide teaching of Christian theology the noblest and profoundest solution of the problems of nature and man; who can see, as St. Paul saw, in Christ the Eternal Word, the source and goal of all created things, and the first-fruits of the new spiritual creation—all can find room and guidance, all can worship side by side in the great Church of Christ.

It is, then, finally, because the teaching of Christianity about God is so infinitely lofty that we say it is not a superstition. It is true that we have by no means, all of us, grasped its teachings about God.

Which of us can dare to say that he has sounded the depths of our Lord's words about the Father, or mastered the spiritual teaching of St. John, or the theology of St. Paul? We dare not say that any man or any Church has as yet entered on the full inheritance of the truths of revelation. There are treasures still for us and for future ages to explore. We can exclaim with St. Paul at the depth of the unsearchable riches of God, and see that the wisdom of God is inexhaustible in length and depth and breadth and height.

The practical duties which arise out of what I have been saying are plain and weighty. They are, in the first place, charity, and the absence of all contempt or sneering in speaking of the more elementary form of religious belief held by others. In the next place, the duty of holding to the forms till you get the spirit, assured that there always is the inner spirit as well as the outer form. And, lastly, the duty of making truthfulness of thought about God, along with all reverence for authority and modesty of heart, one of your supreme aims in life.

These are the principles in dealing with supersti-

tion in yourself and others, and they will make you a better Christian in yourself, and more helpful to others who are struggling upwards to the light of God, as it is revealed to the world in the face of Jesus Christ.

XV

HOW BEST TO SERVE OUR COUNTRY¹

“For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will wish thee prosperity.
Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to
do thee good.”—PSALM cxxii. 8, 9.

DID you ever realise that of this book, the Bible, which God has given us to be the key to our human and divine nature, and therefore at once the guide of our life on earth and the revelation of our life in heaven—did you ever realise that a very large part of it is occupied with the patriotic struggles and wars of the most stubbornly patriotic nation that the world has ever seen? From the time when Moses led them out of Egypt, when they fought and wandered in the desert; from the wars under Joshua and the Judges, under Gideon and Jephtha and Deborah; from the wars under Samuel and David (like that battle you have just listened to in this evening’s lesson); wars under the kings; with Philistines and Moabites, with Ammonites and Edomites, with Syrians and Assyrians, till they were all carried

¹ Preached in the nave of Bristol Cathedral on Sunday evening, 7th November 1886, to the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, the Bristol Engineer Volunteers, and the Clifton College Cadets.

away captive ; and then wars under the Maccabees, and wars with the Romans, till once more Jerusalem was destroyed and the nation broken up,—a large part of the history of Israel is of this fierce patriotism, unquenchable, indestructible.

This book, which so puts before us the history of a nation fighting for its existence century after century, is by God's appointment the book He uses to teach us how to serve Him. This book is the manual of every patriot as well as of every servant of God. I hope you study it and love it. In it we learn how best to serve our country as well as our God. How comes it that this nation was chosen as the vehicle of revelation ; that we still chant its psalms, that its prophets are the great preachers of the world, and that it was from this nation that our Lord Jesus Christ was born after the flesh ? What does this selection mean ? It means that the most elementary principle which the men who compose a nation must learn is the duty of service of our country. It is a sanction to the principle of wars of self-defence. It is the sanction of such a sight as we see here to-night, men in the uniform of the defenders of their country, assembled in this great cathedral for the worship of God.

My sermon is on How best to Serve our Country. The teaching of the Old Testament, not superseded though it is added to in the New, is that the public spirit and patriotism of the people is the first condition of national welfare.

What is worth doing at all is worth doing well. You young men who have learnt this elementary national duty, and are devoting time and money and labour to the cause of national security, should aim

at the highest perfection possible. To be regular, efficient, loyal, helpful, even at the cost of real inconvenience and weariness; to be ready for fresh calls and harder service; to take a pride in every detail of your work,—this is your duty. It is a splendid thing for you to belong to a great regiment, a great movement, a great city, a great country. A man by himself is an insignificant unit; but when he combines with others, and sinks his individuality, then, by a paradox, he becomes great. Better to be the humblest member of a great institution than to be an isolated unit. It is service, loyalty, that brings out the best that is in a man. Therefore I say that one obvious and unquestionable way to serve your country well is to be a patriotic volunteer, skilful, regular, trustworthy, one on whom all your comrades can rely.

And now what next? Is there any other trait in the character of the Jews as remarkable as their patriotism? Yes; there is one which we sometimes fail to notice, because it is so familiar to us. I mean the extraordinary phenomenon of a whole nation that was naturally, so to speak, godly. The whole nation, from top to bottom, was penetrated with the consciousness of God's presence, and with the belief that God verily governed the world, as a king governs a nation. Where else in the ancient world was there such a nation? It was not that the nation were particularly upright, or holy, or pure; on the contrary, they were perverse, and stained with all sorts of crimes. Even their very national heroes, their Jacobs and Davids and Solomons, were not models of rectitude and purity. But they did verily believe in God. Nor was this faith limited to the priests, to

the women, or to any class ; it was shared by all alike. Nor was it a belief they held on the Sabbath and forgot in the week ; that they held in the temple and forgot in the camp. No ; everywhere, in camps and courts, high and low, priest and people, old and young, men and women, were penetrated with the belief in God ; and, what is more, that God was the God of righteousness, and that He always punished them when they sinned. I say we are so familiar with this lesson that we do not notice its strangeness. But there was no other nation that had this deep conviction. God planted this conviction in their hearts that they might be the vehicle of His revelation and teaching to the world. This is why the history of the Jews is our Bible. He has taught the world in their history that not only patriotism but righteousness is essential to the welfare of a nation. You know, and I need not tell you, how the Jews became more and more unrighteous under the kings ; how cruelty, extortion, drunkenness, luxury, and sensuality grew upon them ; and how God sent them prophet after prophet to warn and teach them that righteousness and justice alone, and not soldiers and ships, are the safeguard and strength of a nation ; and when they would not hear, He swept away first Israel and then Judah.

If there is any lesson written plainly all over the Old Testament, it is this—that righteousness is the true prop and support and strength of a nation. The same lesson is, indeed, written plainly in all history, which is but the expression of God's sentence on human action.

Look at the fall of Rome ; it fell because of its huge and monstrous vices ; they sapped the vital

strength of the people, and they fell like a rotten tree. Rome fell because there ceased to be Romans.

Look at Spain. See what it was three centuries ago ; a nation with vast powers and opportunities for good, with South America put into its hands as a precious gift of God. And see what it is now—what it became under the lust of gold, and the lust of the flesh !

Look at France ; with a dwindling population, but more dangerous than ever in its fierce and wild ungodliness and unrest.

No ; it is writ large on the map of Europe, that “righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is a reproach and a curse to any people.”

It is you, and such as you, the living—the living, that have in your hands the honour and welfare of England. Shall England too fall away and perish in ungodliness ? That is the question of the history of the modern world. God has given to us who dwell in “this little isle, set in the silver sea,” a unique position on the globe. “He hath not dealt so with any people.” All nations look to us. As Milton said, “when God wishes a hard thing to be done, He gives it to England to do it.” It was pathetic to read, at a recent international conference on the protection of women and children, how the foreign delegates reiterated that “England must go first in any moral reform.”

It is as true of England as ever it was of Judæa, that she is God’s agent for revealing His will to the world. She is the chosen nation now. God help us all to realise it.

How, then, can a man best serve his country ? For many of the young men I should say, let them

first be volunteers. Not only because it is a security to the country, but because it is a help to character. It gives habits of obedience, which in days of increased individualism and freedom we much need ; of order, of mutual trust, of co-operation with equals, of respect for authority ; it gives occupation, interests, ambition ; in a word, it gives self-respect and character. It gives you more than a personal reputation and dignity to maintain ; you must be worthy of respect for the honour of your corps. It does something to set up, morally as well as physically, every man who belongs to it.

All men cannot, however, be volunteers. But all men can be righteous ; and you may rely on it, that, there is no service you can render so great to the country as that of living a life of righteousness. What do I mean by righteousness ? What was the answer of our Lord to the man who asked Him how he should enter into eternal life ? He bade him "keep the commandments." I mean by righteousness the plain rules of a good and virtuous life. "To hurt nobody by word or deed ; to be true and just in all your dealings ; to bear no malice nor hatred in your heart ; to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and your tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering ; to keep your body in temperance, soberness, and chastity ; not to covet nor desire other men's goods ; but to learn, and labour truly to get your own living." It is this, and such as this. To be sober, pure, honest, diligent, and true ; and every one who is this is serving his country well.

But there is a stage beyond even this. It is good to devote some of your time and thought to the work

of a volunteer ; it is far better to live the life of diligence, uprightness, trustworthiness, and self-restraint. And yet I show unto you a more excellent way.

You are volunteers ; and as such, you know that you may be called on at any time for active service ; for all its privations and dangers, and even for death. You look on active service as a remote contingency. I do not know. Europe is dark with clouds—darker than ever in our lifetime ; and if troubles burst on us—and they may come like a flash of lightning—and our first line of defence were forced, or were to fail, you would be called out. But there is another warfare to which you are called, in which there is always active service. If you serve your Master Christ, you will not be content with an effort after your own righteousness—which, after all, may be so tainted with selfishness as to be little better than filthy rags,—you will be inspired with love ; and the question for you will then be : Where is the enemy ? How can I best serve my great Captain Christ in this warfare against sin ?

I say, look at Bristol. What are each of us doing for others ? How are we fighting the various demons of sin that hold their place here ? Are we helping the young to true manliness and godliness ; keeping them from the evils of drink and gambling and vice and waste, and setting before them a nobler ideal ? Have you yet put before yourself this as a positive duty ? If not, let me urge on you to do so. In a hundred ways you may help on the cause of virtue and right, making the better life easier, and the worse life less attractive. Are you volunteers in this army of charity and of Christ ?

What a waste there is in Bristol! waste of the divine life in human souls. It is a good city. I believe there is none better in England; none where classes are more united, where so much is done by all classes for others; none where the mutual temper is better on the whole; and yet how far we are from the ideal state! There are many blots on Bristol. If you would serve your country best of all, try to remedy some of these evils. "For your brethren and companions' sakes—for the house of the Lord your God—seek to do them *good*." This is the more excellent way. Every man can do something. It is not the smallness of the effect of one good man's work that strikes me most, it is its greatness. If we all put our shoulders to the wheel, what a national reformation might be effected!

My friends, you are members of a grand service; you may be proud of your uniform, for it means that you are ready to serve your Queen and city and country. But you have a yet nobler King, a nobler citizenship, a nobler country; and this service ennobles you yet more. Have you yet really entered on this service? Let me, as your chaplain and your friend, plead with you. Have you ever grasped the great truth, that Jesus Christ has loved you, and given Himself for you; that He has shown you that your human nature is akin to the divine? He who was Himself the Son of God took human form, and was in all respects a man, and so He for ever redeemed human nature; He has saved us by the atonement of His life and death and resurrection. He speaks to us for ever by His love.

That voice of conscience in you is truly the Voice of God Himself speaking in your hearts. It bids

you, "because of the house of the Lord your God, *seek to do them good.*" Listen to it, obey it, for God's own sake. There is your highest service. Thus you shall best serve your country, by serving the very least and lowest of those whom God has made your countrymen. Have you yet begun to love our Lord Jesus Christ? He who best loves Him, best serves his country, and best serves his God.

XVI

THE ADVENT¹

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."
JOHN X. 10.

YOU know that this is the Advent season ; we are celebrating the Advent or the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world. That is why we are here this evening. My friends, let us put away all other thoughts, and try to rise to the height of this great theme. Here is no room for trying to say new or striking things ; there is no room here for novelty or rhetoric ; let us come in all humility and earnestness, and see this great sight.

The Advent is not merely the birth of Jesus Christ ; it was the fulfilment of a long series of foreshadowings and prophecies. It was a part of the eternal counsel of God. It was the advent of the Word of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds ; the Word by whom all things were created ; who was in all men, though they knew it not, as the light that lighteneth every man coming into the world ; it was the appearance in finite time, for a few years, in human form, of this the eternal Son of

¹ Preached in Bristol Cathedral on 12th December 1886.

God. It is more than a birth, it is a long-heralded advent. One point only shall occupy us this evening—Why did He come? What was the main purpose, or the main result of our Lord's coming into this world of humanity, and taking our human form? Why did He come so? If I were to ask you this, I do not doubt that you would answer in various forms of words, but that all would mean the same thing; you would say that He came for our redemption, to open to us the way to heaven, to teach us about eternal life, to give us an example that we should follow His steps. These, and such as these, would be the answers that you all would give; and perhaps some of you would quote our Lord's own words that I have taken as my text, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." And of all the answers, this, in our Lord's words, seems to me the most complete and the most central. It is to explain this to you, with all the simplicity and earnestness in my power, that I am come here to-night. This is the message I have to deliver. Christ came that you, each one of you, might have the abundant life. Let me recall some of the familiar words on this subject, that you may feel sure that I am delivering a message, and not merely speaking the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but those which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Think of this: "So God loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." What is this life,—this abundant life, this eternal life,—what is it? Let us fasten our thought on this great subject, and not rest till we understand the answer. My friends, some of you perhaps think that the life,

the eternal life, or, as it is called in the Old Version, the "everlasting" life, is something that begins when we are dead ; that it is a life in heaven of which we as spiritual beings may one day partake, but of which we cannot partake now ; that the sole object of Christ's coming is to teach us about this life in heaven after we are dead, and to make it possible for God to admit us to heaven by the sacrifice on our behalf of His own Son's Divine life. This is very commonly thought, but it is only a partial and incomplete, an imperfect view of the teaching of the Bible. Eternal life is not only a hope, it is a reality, a present possession. The Bible maintains one uniform teaching, that eternal life begins now on earth. "I came," says our Lord, "that they may have life," have it now, here, while we live, as well as hereafter. In another place our Lord tells us plainly what eternal life is : "This is eternal life"—remember these words—"this is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This is plain, to know God and Christ is, even now, eternal life. Passage after passage may be quoted to prove to you that the eternal life spoken of by our Lord is the spiritual life that begins now on earth, and then, when our bodies die, goes on, as we trust, into the eternal or spiritual world in which all imagination fails to picture, and revelation does not attempt to describe, what we shall be. The eternal or spiritual life begins now. What saith our Lord? "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* eternal life,"—not "shall have when he dies,"—he hath it. "The words that I speak unto you," He tells us, "they are life."

"I am the resurrection, and the life," He tells

us. To have the Christ in us is to be risen with Christ, and it is to have a new life in our souls. So we are told by St. Paul in the plainest, the most accurate language of all, "to be spiritually-minded *is* life." Yes, and to be carnally-minded *is* death. Not "shall lead to life and to death": they *are* so. They differ from one another as light from darkness, as life from death. So in that collect that we daily use in our morning prayer, we repeat the words, "O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life": "quem nosse vivere,"—as it is in the original Latin,—"*quem nosse vivere*," whom to know is to live. I have very often found in conversation that these and all the many similar passages which speak of eternal life as something beginning now, plain as they are, have yet had a different meaning read into them. "To be spiritually-minded is life," people will sometimes say, means that if you are spiritually-minded you will go to heaven when you die. Or, when our Lord said that eternal life was the knowledge of God, He meant that in heaven we should know God perfectly. But it is not so, and believe me, that if you will read your Bible with the simple desire to find out what it is that our Lord and His Apostles meant by the word *life*, you will see that the thought I may have suggested to you, explains, nay, gives an almost startling reality to many a verse that you may have thought obscure, or metaphorical, or referring only to the future. Take one or two only. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "I am the bread of life." "The life was manifested, and we have seen it." All these refer to this spiritual life,

this life of the spirit in this world, that I have spoken of.

I will not stay to comment on these verses in detail, but I do beg of you to think them over in the light of this Advent teaching, this Advent verse: "I came that men may have life, the spiritual life, even now." For, to sum up what I have been showing, it is that our Lord came to give us now this spiritual, this higher life, which is, we trust, an eternal and everlasting life in the future world, but is most assuredly something intensely real in this.

What is it in this life that I describe as intensely real? Perhaps St. Paul's words are the simplest description of it: "To be spiritually-minded is life." Eternal life is the life of the spirit; it is not its lasting for ever that is the mark by which we know it; we know nothing about eternity, when time is not, and space is not, and all the conditions of existence are other than they are now; eternal life is known to us, it comes within our personal experience, as spiritual life. Our Lord has indeed shown us by His Resurrection, and taught us by His words that the spiritual life begun on earth does not perish and die, but that it is now on earth that it is offered to us, now on earth that we are eternally—that is, spiritually—to live. Do you all understand me? Let me give you an illustration; you would say that a stone had no life; if you compared it with a plant you would say that a plant has a certain sort of life, a vegetable life; and if you take an animal, a dog or sheep, you say that here is a higher life still, the animal life; go on and take a man, here you meet a new phenomenon, the intellectual life, the reason which accompanies the use of language, that greatest

of God's gifts to man ; but there is a higher life still, there is the life of the spirit, there is in you, as you very well know, a faculty higher than intellect, higher than will ; something before which intellect and will alike bow—it is the spiritual faculty, the sense of right and duty, the conscience we call it, the faculty by which we are conscious of God, and through which God speaks to us. This is the beginning of spiritual life.

Is it in every one? God knows. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." But that you may have it if you will, none can doubt, and no doubts of others can shake your knowledge of its reality in you. Now you see what I mean. Christ came that you might have this spiritual life abundantly, that you might learn through Him to know God, that you might be spiritually - minded. This is the grand and splendid aim of Christ's coming, a work surely worthy of the very Son of God, that we, and that all the world, might rise out of the mere vegetable and animal life, rise above even the intellectual life, and enjoy the higher spiritual life which is the transcendent blessing on this earth while we live, and in heaven hereafter.

But what is it *now* ? It is to live in this world as one who has a Divine Master to whom he always looks. You can fancy how a great and worthy purpose, a noble ideal, transforms a life ; how the little disappointments and anxieties of life vanish before it ; you have no time or room for such trifles ; life is all too short for your work ; and temper and worry and antagonism are not compatible with the trust in God that comes with the

higher life. It is to be willing to fix your thoughts on God's will, and to sacrifice lower aims to attain it. It is to subdue the flesh which forces the animal life upon us ; to keep on a lower plane, if need be, even the intellectual life, for the cause of Christ ; to subordinate all you have and are to secure the growth and full active energy of the spiritual life. It is to love the brethren, that mark by which St. John tells us that "we know we have passed from death unto life." Lay hold on, grasp, secure for yourselves this eternal life now. Do you ask, How shall I grasp this life? What saith our Lord? If thou wouldest enter into life—as He replied to the young noble—if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. Do not deceive yourselves, it is doing your plain duty, keeping the commandments, that will best help you to enter into life. It is not a matter of sentiment and emotion ; the discipline and struggle, the life is in action ; you cannot lead the higher life, you cannot be entering into eternal life, if you voluntarily are doing wrong. You must be truthful ; no petty dishonesties and cheatings and secret debts. You must be kind ; no slanderings and jealousies and quarrels. You must be pure ; no giving way willingly to the lusts of the flesh ; no filling your imagination with nasty reading. You must be generous, large-hearted, even though your means are small. All these faults of falsehood and quarrellings and lusts and meanness make impossible—do they not?—the spiritual life. How shall you enter life? Once more, by keeping the commandments. And if you say you cannot, that old habits and tempers and passions are too much for you, then I say it is precisely for *you*, to save *you*, to give *you* this eternal life that Christ came.

He does speak to your very heart, you know that He does. You have the germ of this spiritual life already. Read, therefore, and think about Him more than ever; His words *are* life. Pray more than ever; resolve that you will lay hold on this life of the spirit. No man attains it perfectly; even St. Paul did not dare to say that he had attained to this life, either was already perfect, but that he followed on if that he might attain. And so also let us follow on in humility and in hope. One alone had that life in perfection; Christ is at once the means whereby spiritual life comes to us, and the one perfect example of the spiritual life. You look at Christ, you are drawn to Him, you follow, you love, you serve Him, and so there grows up that knowledge of Him which is eternal life. Thus Christ saves you, saves you from this lower life; the words that He speaks, they still are spirit and they still are life. To know Him is still the eternal life.

Let us go back now and answer the question asked at first, Why did Christ come? He came to give us spiritual life in this world, which shall be perfected in the world to come, when we shall see Him and be made like Him. And what is the spiritual life? It is the knowledge of God, and the living in His sight as His child. How is it won by each of us? Through the grace of God, by keeping the commandments, by the life, that is, of duty inspired and rendered possible by the love to our Master that comes to all who contemplate and serve Him. How are we assured of it? "By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

My friends, it is often a taunt against Christianity

that the thoughts and hopes of Christ's followers are all in the other world, and that they are not so useful, happy, and good in this world as some who have no faith and hope in the after-world. It is a taunt against Christians, but not against Christ or His teaching, when rightly understood. Nay, if we were truly spiritually-minded, if we did strenuously lay hold of this higher, nobler life, should we not sweeten all life infinitely, be better brothers and sisters, better parents and children, better masters and servants, better citizens and Englishmen? All our life and conduct would be in the Lord ; in that higher plane of life where love and not selfishness is the atmosphere. If we would seize the real blessing that this Advent season commemorates, let us bring into our daily life, in shop and factory and street and office and home, the divine principle of spiritual life, which Christ has taught us in His words and shown us in His life. Let us now,—and it is the only way in which we can daily keep His Advent,—let us now try to make Him our pattern more than ever before ; let us keep His commandments, and specially that eleventh commandment, that new commandment that He has given us, that we love one another. So that when Christ shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge the quick and dead, we may be found an acceptable people in His sight. Then I promise you, as Christ's minister and messenger, I testify to you as His witness, and as a steward of His mysteries, that you shall enter into this spiritual life ; you shall feel that you have it in you, and it shall strengthen day by day ; as you cut away the thorns that hinder it, and deepen the soil by prayer, it shall dominate your life, it shall make life happy

wherever and whatever you are, giving you a hundred-fold more now in this present life; it shall subdue your faults, transform your character, and make you a blessing to all with whom you have to do; it will make the humblest life sublime. You shall truly enter into this spiritual life on earth more and ever more till you die, and then without sorrow and without fear you can place yourself in the everlasting arms of God's fatherly love, knowing that you are safe with Him in life and in death.

If there are weary and fainting hearts here to-night, if sin and failures have crushed you, yet still look up; there is in you, you know that there is, the divine life, the spiritual life, the sympathy with Christ; there is the seed of life even now throbbing and bursting in your heart. Work out then your own salvation, do not leave it to chance or to despair; wrestle in prayer this night; stereotype by some right action any good thought which God has put into your heart this night; lay hold on this eternal life in this world now, lay hold on it at once, and never let it go. It is for this that Christ came, and it is for this blessed gift that we have met to-night to thank Him and bless His holy name, and to proclaim to all men what He has done for our souls. Pray with me for the spread of this among us, that here in our ancient city all may be brought to this higher life, the life of the Spirit. Doubtless Christ has other sheep which are not of this flock, yet this is His appointed way; Christ is the door and the way to everlasting life. Pray, therefore, and work for the spread of this greatest of all blessings. Much is being done among us for education,

for recreation, and for social advance ; but could we all enter into this divine life, all would be attuned, all hearts would be filled with love and holiness and peace. Ponder then these Advent thoughts ; and may God grant that you and I may be indeed sharers in this spiritual life which is happiness now and a foretaste of happiness hereafter.

XVII

MUTUAL SERVICE¹

“But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you : but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister ; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant.”—
MATT. xx. 25, 26, 27.

HAVE any of us fully grasped the wide-reaching significance of this saying? It contains a contrast drawn by our Master's own hand between the ideal life of the man of the world so far as he is non-Christian, and the ideal life of the follower of Christ. Such and such, Christ tells us, is the aim of the great of this world ; not so, He tells us, shall it be among you. The non-Christian, the secular, the natural, the ordinary theory of life, at any rate from Monday morning to Saturday night, is “Be master, get the service of others, get offices and titles, and posts where men may serve you ; play the great game of life ; be rich, and surround yourself with comfort ; be rich, so that you may buy any service you want ; above all, involve yourself in no service to others, no obligation ; be independent, accumulate

¹ Preached in Westminster Abbey on Sunday morning, 16th January 1887.

money for your children, so that they too may be able to command the service of others; pay others for their services to you, but there your obligation ends. You are not bound to serve them." This is the theory of the world so far as it is non-Christian; and it is one into which the very best of us is constantly relapsing from forgetfulness and sloth; but Christ says: "Not so shall it be among you." Among us, if we are true followers of Christ, mutual service is and must be the law of life; and what is mutual service?

Mutual service is something very practical. Do not put it aside as one of the counsels of perfection, or as a theory that won't work on week-days. I am not going to bid you to give up life, to be something romantic, a missionary or a sister of mercy, abroad or at home. Mutual service may be the abiding principle of everyday life in any station of domestic, or public, or mercantile life. It is recognised by many individuals in all stations, though it is harder for the rich than for the poor. The poor must serve, unwillingly it may be, unless they have the happiness to transmute their service into the willing service of Christ; the rich need not serve in the same way. But the principle does work even among the rich, and it might work universally, and make our England a very heaven.

Think, first, how much is done for us; what service we receive and absorb. Let our imagination travel for a moment over the scenes where toil is even now going on for us, to the far countries whence come our food supplies—all the world laid under tribute; think of our sailors in their hard and dangerous work; visit in fancy our miners, our

labourers, our factory-workers, our clerks, the myriad-handed, myriad-headed service of this great city. What service has been spent on each of us! It passes all imagination. Others are always working for us. We are always being ministered unto. Day by day, hour by hour, our debt to those workers accumulates. Go back over the years of your life. How many have toiled that you may become what you are, educated, refined, the scholar, the gentleman or the lady, at any rate so far removed from the hard-handed labourer, stunted in body and dulled in mind by meagre fare and ceaseless exposure and fatigue. Think of it, you young men who have been to public schools and universities. Think of it, you Westminster boys who are still at a public school. With what purpose does society spare you the rougher toils of life? Go back still further in time. Think what has been the labour of creating the civilisation, the conquest over Nature, even the delicate organisation of faculties that we unconsciously inherit. Which of us can repay to the existing generation, still more to the world, the vast debt we owe? How can we even attempt it? You and I cannot go forth to plough the untilled fields of our colonies and lay the foundations of a society yet unborn. How can we serve our fellows, crushed as many of them are by unreciprocated service? Are we not indeed under a sort of spell that forces us to sit, and be clothed, and carried about, and amused by the labours of others? No, it is not so. You may break the spell. It is open to all of us to render service to others over and above our business in life. We may render bodily service; and we know how high a value our Lord

puts on the service of our bodily needs. We may diminish the scale of our own comfort, that we may raise the standard of the comfort of those who work for us ; we may thus serve our own generation even in its physical needs, and this is an absolute duty.

But there is other service than this. When material nature is conquered, its wastes tilled, its wild beasts slain, there remains the harder problem of conquering human nature, reclaiming its waste places, casting out its evil spirits. Material service is not the only service, there is the splendid service of giving light and knowledge—the service of thought and courtesy and friendship. There is the noblest service of all, the spiritual service of lifting the ignorant and degraded, of supplying “the spiritually indispensable—the bread of life.” Here are our worlds to conquer, our unknown seas to traverse. Men have toiled for us in body, and are toiling, that we in our turn may toil for them and give them light and life and hope and heaven. This is the true mutual service, and this we may all render. This is the noblest life, the ideal life to put before our children ; for is it not indeed a life fashioned on the example of Christ ? Do you understand this glorious ideal of a community based on voluntary mutual service, inspired by mutual love and brotherhood in Christ, a community whose passion is for giving, not grasping ; whose pleasure is in service, which makes no distinction, except from natural aptitudes, between one kind of service and another ; to whom it is no degradation to prepare food or clothes or to wash the feet of those for whom Christ died—a body in which the hands and feet are proud to minister to the needs of the heart and the head,

because the heart and the head in their turn are inspiring and guiding and bringing blessings to the hands and feet? Do you understand this? This and nothing less is the ideal of a Christian nation, and to bring about this ideal is the work of a Christian Church.

And now ask yourself, What are you doing to approach and realise this ideal? Are you still absorbing service, or are you giving it? Are you giving enough? "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Your life will approach the Christian standard just so far as it consists of willing and generous service. But you may ask: "Are you not overdoing this? Are you going to make this doctrine of mutual service co-extensive with Christianity? Are you not pressing your text too far?" No; fear not; this is the social ideal of Christianity, for it is the social ideal of Christ. "He that is great among you shall be your servant." It is the social ideal of St. Paul, as we heard in the epistle which has just been read. There remain, of course, the personal, the Christ-like virtues, the humility, the purity, the love of God, the prayerful aspiration of the soul; but the social ideal is mutual service, and this is only possible in perfection to the Christ-like.

And observe, that for this Christ appeals not to the weak but to the strong. There is here no exaltation of the feebler virtues, no attenuation of human nature that excludes the strong; on the contrary, it is the strong in faith, the resolute, the cheery, the wise, the very best men and the bravest women, that can alone do the best service.

Is mutual service then only another name for charity? No, not quite; and you will see the

difference. It is indeed the same as that unreserved charity of Christ and of St. Paul that desires to spend and to be spent ; but it is not the same as our modern charity with its limited liability. Our charity is sometimes a matter of caprice rather than of reason. Charity, moreover, does not cover the whole of life ; but mutual service does. It gives a meaning to all our relations in life, to our business, our pleasures ; to the daily intercourse of our homes, our chance meetings ; it inspires courtesy and good manners ; it demands fidelity and honest work ; it makes a man take pride in his work and be content with it, whatever it may be, as one of the minor links of mutual service ; it dignifies, nay, it glorifies, the work of wife and mother in many a household. We do not speak of such work as charity ; but it is mutual service.

This principle may help some of us to see and define both the grand truth and the fatal error in the common teaching of Socialism. In proclaiming this ideal of mutual service lies the real and permanent strength of Socialism. So far Socialism is the truly Christian, truly human, truly divine goal of society. "Each for all" is but the expression as a universal motto of the words of Christ, which ought to form our maxim as individuals : "I am among you as he that serveth" ; but the weakness, the demonstrable error, of Socialistic schemes is the belief that this desired result can be attained by compulsion or by system. Great abuses in any society may be checked by legislation, but the cruelty and selfishness and sloth of human nature will only break out in some other way. It needs a transformation of motive. The glorious ideal of "each for all" can be won only

by voluntary service, and voluntary service means that the secret springs of all human nature shall have been touched. Those who humbly make mutual service and the example of Christ their principle and guide of life are the truest Socialists, and those who impatiently forsake our great Master, and deride His method as too slow and unbusiness-like, are the greatest enemies of the true Socialism of the future. This will come—this real Christian Socialism—when Christ's kingdom is supreme in the hearts of men, and will not be perfect till then. "He that believeth will not make haste."

There are two historical ideals that we ought always to keep before ourselves and to put earnestly before our children, to mould and fashion their lives as only the ideals of youth can mould and fashion them. They are the ideals of our Church and of our country. I cannot now say more than a few words on either, but the Church of England offers us in its history magnificent illustrations of personal service and a social ideal of brotherhood. Its motto is, "In love serving one another." Its history is the history of the strong toiling for the weak, and the ideal is not forgotten in the Church at this day.

And it is not forgotten in our country. The bonds that used to bind master and servant, squire and tenant, merchant and townsfolk, in the sweet and helpful fellowship of olden time in Merry England have not wholly passed into romance. At this day there is no house of business so great that its heads may not acknowledge their bonds of sympathy and mutual service with all their employés, no business relations which may not be sweetened and ennobled by fidelity, "as unto the Lord" both in servant and master.

But I must conclude. Time does not permit me to trace the ways in which this Christian principle will express itself more and more. I thank God it is so largely felt as it is, but I ask you all to grasp this principle firmly, especially you men and women of education and culture. Think, "What am I giving, what can I give, in return for all the service that is given unto me?" Take stock of yourself, and ask: "How can I, placed where I am, be of most service to my Church and my country, and be amongst the benefactors of the world on a small scale or on a great?" It was a Stoic saying, but it might be a Christian motto, that you owe the world something as well as yourself. *Non tibi sed toti genitum te credere mundo*. You would not like to go out of the world in debt. Be generous; grudge nothing that is done in the service of others, and you shall find, as George Herbert found—

" All earthly joys grow less
To the one joy of doing kindness."

I had written these words when the tidings reached me of the death of one whom all England loved and respected—Lord Iddesleigh. The canon in residence will speak of him this afternoon more fully and more worthily than I can possibly do. But it seems to me as if my words were not wholly unfitted to be his funeral sermon, for I have been putting before you an ideal life, one that may be infinitely varied in details, but is one in principle—the life of mutual service. I have specially put before you the demands on men of culture and leisure and wealth. You will all feel that, tested even by this high standard, his life did not fall short. He did devote to public service all his high talents,

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all the fine product of a gentle birth, and of Eton and of Oxford, all the slowly-matured wisdom of political experience. He has not gone out of the world "in debt." All the service done for him, that made him what he was, has been repaid to the world by his life of public spirit, of generosity, private and political, and of scrupulous honour and righteousness. I have quoted to you a line of George Herbert; let me quote the lines that precede it, for the maxim that saying lays down was the maxim and is the moral of Lord Iddesleigh's life:

"Be useful where thou liv'st, that so men may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindness, great parts, and good plans are the way
To compass this. Find out men's wants and will,
And meet them there. All earthly joys grow less
To the one joy of doing kindness."

One last word. I have put before you Christ's ideal of society—society as it should be. I have told you what a debt we all owe to others; I have told you that the happiness of each one and the well-being of all is bound up in the principle of mutual service, and if you need reminding of a more sacred motive, look on the face of Christ, who Himself came "in the form of a servant," and hear His appeal—an appeal which no disappointments or ingratitude of men can ever obliterate. "All this have I done for thee. What doest thou for Me?" "Whatsoever is done for the least of these my brethren, is done unto me."

XVIII

THE RELATIONS OF RICH AND POOR¹

“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”—MATT. xvi. 24.

NO one is offended at these words. We all like to be told, especially in Lent, that we ought to “deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Christ.” Even to listen to the words gives us some sense of satisfaction, as if it were a step towards actually obeying them. They are metaphorical, and we do not feel under any intellectual or moral compulsion to translate them into practical rules of conduct. We leave them as they are, and then they do not ruffle our calm conscience.

But it is wholesome for us to see these words in another and directly personal shape. Then, perhaps, they will rouse some thought, some indignation, or it may be grief; possibly, even, some practical amendment and a clearer view of the Christian theory of life. I am, therefore, going to read to you a letter which was published about three weeks ago, addressed by some East-end London clergy to every London

¹ Preached in Bristol Cathedral on Sunday evening, 13th March 1887.

incumbent ; and I propose to add some remarks on it. Let me call your earnest attention to it. It does but repeat our Lord's words in a nineteenth century dress :

A party of London clergy, concerned at existing social conditions and conscious of their own faults, have, as a result of several conferences, sent a copy of the following appeal to every London incumbent :—

DEAR BROTHER—The rich, as a class, offer an example of living which is contrary to the Christian profession, though the actions of some of their number are a striking protest against that example. They waste their lives and their wealth. They give nothing to the poor but alms ; they neither deny themselves, nor follow Christ. They do not first seek the Kingdom of Heaven, but quote the laws of political economy, or the decisions of the doctor, or the demands of society, to show why they cannot obey God. Nevertheless, the rich, as a class, go to church and are supposed to be typical Christians. As long as this is so how can we expect that the poor will be moved by their example to seek in Christianity help or solace ?

The following are offenders against the law of Christ :—

1. Possessors of knowledge, beautiful objects, or luxuries, who do not share them with the poor. Owners of houses and parks, givers of dinners, who invite to the enjoyment of their best those only who can ask again.

2. Women who carelessly wear fine clothes, without having inquired into the possible cost in a sister's shame or death. Bargain-mongers who forget that some "cheap" things are too dear for "human" use.

3. Employers who take their profit and do not concern themselves to know how the employed live. Men who think that five per cent is a law of God, and that the body He created to be the temple of His Spirit can be fed, clothed, and recreated on a few shillings a week.

4. All who, having earned or inherited a livelihood, plead that they have no time to make friends among the poor or to perform public duties.

The contrast between the condition of those who are equally God's children becomes unbearable in the light of modern publicity. Many are driven to think that only by the use of

force will the poor obtain from the rich the means to develop their capacities for knowing, feeling, and doing.

We believe, on the contrary, that by the use of force the poor would grow in greed and selfishness ; gaining with wealth many of the vices which have gone with riches. And our hope is, therefore, that the rich, moved to follow Christ themselves, may offer such sacrifices and make such personal efforts for the sake of their brethren, that rich and poor together may be able to live their life as God's children.

Dear brother, the thought of these things weighs us down and stings our own consciences, and we feel forced to speak out. You and we are fellow-workers for the same end ; we hold the same theory of life, and we are all labouring that Christ may be in man, and man in Christ. We ask you with much humility, Will you bring this matter, in all its terrible reality, before those to whom you have to preach ? Will you, for the sake of Christ and his poor, warn such as attend your church, and commit any of the offences which we have named, that they cannot call themselves in any full sense followers of the Master ?

We do not sign our names lest they should suggest personal considerations, which should be far removed from such a subject, and take away from the force of the naked truth which we have ventured to set before you.

X. Y. Z.

This is a very remarkable document. It was addressed primarily to the clergy of London, but, in spirit ; it is addressed to us clergy of Bristol ; and I, for one, do not think that we ought to pass by in silence such a public and touching appeal. It is a request to us clergy to speak to the middle-class, well-to-do congregations, such as this, and those that meet in most of our Clifton and Bristol churches, on no less a subject than the whole theory and scheme of their life. It is a request to us to bring home to our hearers the terrible contrast between the comfort and ease of the church and chapel-going people, and the mean, unlovely, and often degraded life of those among whom lies the lot of the writers ; and to bring

it home that we are largely responsible for it, and as a proof that we are not yet in any full sense followers of our Master. It is an indictment of us all. It is you and I who are among those who "possess knowledge, and beautiful objects, and luxuries"; and it is we who "do not share them with the poor" to any appreciable extent. It is we who invite to dinner our friends of the same class as ourselves, and are invited in return. We wear, I do not say "fine clothes," but good clothes, without inquiring how they are made. I confess I have no notion who made my coat, or whether the workmen were properly paid. It is we who, in our various capacities as employers of labour, look for interest on our money, who live in our own rank. It is we who often plead inability to "make friends among the poor" or to "perform public duties."

Let us distinctly understand that it is we who are indicted, not some unknown people called "the rich"; and it is said that "if we commit any of these offences, we cannot call ourselves in any full sense followers of the Master." It is the whole scheme and framework of society that is indicted, and ourselves as individual members of it. Such being the charge, what are we to plead? Guilty, or not guilty? To the indictment of the scheme of society as a whole I plead "Not guilty." To the indictment of nearly every individual among us I plead "Guilty." I will proceed to explain at once what I mean. The distinction is important.

It is difficult, when we look on the hideous contrast between Clifton and St. Jude's—the wealth, comfort, and artistic surroundings of the one, and the squalor, crowding, and meanness of the other—not to

do as these writers practically do, indict society as a whole. We almost admit that it must be wrong for us to have these beautiful things which others have not ; to fare comfortably every day, while others, just as deserving as we, are living hungrily and uncertainly. We feel that, somehow, the world is out of joint.

And yet we know that we are under a sort of compulsion. We could not invert the whole principles of society, and we would not if we could. We have a dim feeling that the existing principles of society, as a whole, rest on some imperious though unformulated necessity or law of God, and that we should be wrong as well as foolish to rebel, and try absolutely to invert the whole fabric. We feel this, but shrink from saying so, because we cannot tell how far our judgment is warped by our interests. And in this state of mind men are uneasy. They cannot see where right ends and wrong begins. They wish to combine the fullest Christianity with the fullest common sense, and it perplexes them to be told that their compromise is a failure, that they are trying to serve God and Mammon, and that each service spoils the satisfaction that might be got out of the other. So they make up their minds to this uneasy compromise, and give, or refuse, a trifle in alms. And on this great problem we clergy, as a rule, give but little light. We give general advice and excellent principles, the difficulty being to define the limits of the application of these principles.

Now, in pleading "Not guilty" for the scheme of society as a whole, resting as it does on private property, competition, and self-interest, I wish not only to point out the obvious considerations that we have each got our own work to do, and that society

necessitates sub-division of labour, that each of us must mind his own business, or everything would break down in failure. We must be "not slothful in business," whether it be teaching, or doctoring, or manufacturing, or trading, or labouring; and this is inconsistent with a universal solicitude as to the mode of life of all others. We *cannot* be responsible for the ever-widening circle of those whom we indirectly employ. It is equally obvious that there must be great diversities of life, corresponding to the diverse needs of life and the diverse aptitudes of men. Some modes of life, essential to the well-being of a nation, demand long education, and leisure, and freedom from bread-winning, and other demands on time and thought. Equally obvious is it that there will exist in an imperfectly Christian nation a more or less large class of people, not engaged in business, of small ability and energy, not employing their leisure and freedom from toil for any public good. Their existence is the outcome of the existence of private property and a settled, law-abiding, civilised government.

But what I chiefly wish to insist on is, that inasmuch as no reasonable or even plausible scheme has ever been produced to show how a civilised society, taking people as they now are, can be organised on any other universal basis than private property, and the impulse to labour which arises from every man's hope to get the fruit of his labour, we are compelled to regard the system itself, as a whole, as resting on fundamental necessities, the unwritten laws of God, for the human race, at any rate in its present state of development, and intended for their good. Death, it has been said, cannot be an evil because it is universal. Perhaps the same may be said of the

existing stimulus to labour. It is capable of abuse, as all human passions may be abused. But it has a right use as well as a wrong use, and our aim should be to find the right use.

Further, I think it ought to be fully recognised by us Christian teachers that *distinctively* Christian principles, as distinguished from universal principles of justice, do not govern, and were apparently not intended to govern, the corporate life of a *nation* until the individuals in the nation were more or less completely transformed by it. We are influenced by the Jewish theory of a nation collectively devoted to the service of Jehovah, and in possession of a national covenant and national privileges, forgetting that this has made way for Christ's teaching of individual responsibility and a leaven of divinely-led souls transforming gradually the whole mass. Life would, perhaps, seem less of a tangle and blunder if we recognised this, and saw that Christian principles affect the individual, and transform the whole by transforming the parts. There is no inherent necessity in the nature of things that the present principles of society should work ill. Selfishness and indifference to others is not one of these *principles*; it is the defect of the individual members—of ourselves.

I said just now that *distinctively* Christian principles do not govern, and were apparently not intended to govern, the corporate life of a nation until the individuals in the nation were more or less completely transformed; and this may seem obscure, and needs illustration. The work of a statesman, for example, is to consider the whole of the conditions of human society as it is. That work is neither Christian nor unchristian; it deals with the whole,

while religion deals with the parts ; it affects masses, not molecules. He cannot enforce love and charity. He cannot decide questions of war and international policy by any principles taken from the Gospels. They do not apply. His sphere as a statesman lies apart. Some of us may deplore that politics cannot yet be conducted on simple Christian principles, and may be unable to understand how what would be wrong in the morality of a Christian man may have to be tolerated in a nation which is very imperfectly Christian. The whole histories of such subjects as the establishment of hospitals, the relation of Christianity to slavery, to unnatural crimes, to the protection of children, to the position of women, are illustrations of what I am saying—that Christianity affects political conditions by affecting individual character.

And if in the political world we see that Christianity does not cover the whole field, it is equally plain, though not equally familiar, that it does not do so in the social and commercial world. Business is business. It goes on with a steady, constant stream. Manufacturing, transporting, buying, selling, banking have their inexorable necessities, and form a very large part of human life, regulated by well-ascertained and uniform conditions, and it is not the part of Christianity to attempt to set aside these laws. Christianity works on the individual ; it works on society in this way ; it alters the raw material out of which society is composed, not the mould in which it is cast ; as a mineral spring will transform into purest marble some decaying organism and yet retain every finest detail of its organisation. "My kingdom," says Christ, "is not of this world."

It is in the heart. And the regeneration of society, the removal of the glaring ills which now deface it, will come when we permit the leavening influence of the Gospel to act on us as individuals. The evils of competition and private ownership will be met, not by violence, by altering the spirit of the competitor and the owner. Co-operation and joint possession will become natural and pleasing when we are individually better folk.

If by some miracle of grace we church and chapel-goers—I do not now speak of others ; the letter is addressed to us—could all become perfectly Christianised to-morrow, let us ask what change we should witness. Not surely a reversal of all the conditions under which we live. Rich and poor would still be here ; business would go on as at present ; busy and absorbed men would pass us in the street. Still there would be the labourer with hard hands and weary frame ; and still the great employer of labour with capital to keep such employment steady ; the solid fly-wheels of commerce that drive all the little clattering wheels of the world ; the great lakes which keep the fertilising rivers fairly full even in times of drought. Still life would be hard for most of us ; in the sweat of our brow we should still eat bread. But we should ourselves be different—how vastly different ! The contrast would be that which St. Paul tries to paint. We should not “live after the flesh, but after the spirit” ; all business would go on as before, but in ourselves the divine desire to give would replace the animal desire to get. We are never left without witness that this may be so.

And so, after thus explaining what I mean by pleading “Not guilty” to the indictment of the

scheme of society as a whole, I pass on to plead "Guilty" to the indictment of us as individuals.

I am more and more impressed every day with the extreme incompleteness with which we, as individuals, have as yet absorbed the teaching of Christ, or understood the ideal of society and of manhood and womanhood that He revealed to the earth. It is to this that we should lend our utmost efforts—to realise in ourselves—we religious people, I mean—to realise in our own minds and lives what Christ's principles are, and the existing framework of society would not then be found a failure. It might be glorified into the very body and temple of Christ. Let us see, if time will at all permit, in what respects our individual ideals and standards are conspicuously unworthy, unchristian. And once more remember that I am not speaking of the faults of some one else, but of ourselves.

First, I put our religious ideal. Here, if anywhere, we might be expected to have a high standard, even if we did not reach it. But we have made our religion to consist far too much in meeting for worship, and to listen to chants and hymns and prayers and sermons; we have forgotten that these are not the end, but the means; the end is the coming upon earth of the kingdom of God. If, for example, it were put before you and other respectable church-goers of Clifton that they would be doing God more service if they went every Sunday down to some of our suburbs, and gathered some children around them, and brightened Sunday for them by reading and pictures and play, and visited the old and infirm, heard their troubles, helped forward their aims, with true sisterly or brotherly sympathy, they would, I

fear, reply: "Why, I should always miss church. That would not be right."

You remember the reply in the Gospels, "It is corban, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me"? Do you know what it meant? It meant that when they wished to evade the duty of supporting their parents, they made a pretended gift to God of their wealth, and so put it out of their power, while all the time they kept it for themselves and enjoyed it. Is there no parallel? Many of our services are spiritual luxuries; to attend them so regularly is very like diligently stoking a fire so arranged as to give no heat and drive no engine. Year after year passes, and who is the better for them? It is not marching forward; it is the operation our volunteers know as "Marking time"—regularly lifting up our feet and regularly putting them down in the same place. Where in our Gospels and Epistles, where in early history, do we read of such a conception of religion? What is the effect of a service now—on yourself, for example? The religion that I read of, is that "pure and undefiled" religion, "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

But when, besides having this deformed ideal of making worship the sole test and end, instead of the means, we attempt to insist on a uniformity of use and ceremony and phrase, and make it the battle-field between rival parties, then we depart still further from the mind of Christ. This has been the case in England since the Reformation, and it is the case now. We see hatred and distrust embittering Christians, and paralysing Christianity, and it is we religious people that are most to blame.

It is not only toleration that we need, it is the cordial welcoming of large diversities within our national churches as the ideal way of utilising all the various diversities of human nature and divine gifts.

Again, in another respect, our religious ideal is terribly faulty. One illustration is that we don't believe it is hard for the rich to be saved. We believe it is hard for the poor, and so it may be—I am not speaking of them—but I am very sure it is harder for the rich. I am only saying what Christ said. It is terribly hard for us in our class to practise the love and self-denial and patience and goodness (which is the real godliness), to have the ever-present sense of dependence on God, that the poor, when truly Christian, can have. It is hard, it is almost impossible, for us to give anything that shall cost us real self-denial, and make us feel the pinch, because so much is left. And so we find it difficult to keep before us the ideal of mutual service, that friendship for the brethren which is distinctively the Christian virtue.

And the social ideal we form for our poorer friends is not yet a noble, still less a Christian one. If we woke up to-morrow and found ourselves in a full sense followers of the Master, we should bend ourselves instantly to raising the social and educational condition of the labouring classes, cost what it might. We should not simply tinker at results; we should strike at causes. To speak of Bristol alone, we should provide every parish with the necessary appliances for social and educational needs. Every parish would have what I once called "its big brother;" in an individual or an association of a

few friends, to help it to get at once what it wants. We should establish for them what we enjoy so much for ourselves—open spaces and recreation rooms, and libraries, and music, and evening classes, and nurses and baths, and lodgings for young men and for young women, without thinking “that five per cent is a law of God” in work of this kind! We should, for example, face the terrible evil of too early marriages by raising the standard of comfort, and by providing proper lodgings for the unmarried who are now driven to marry from having no home.

How do we receive these and similar proposals? What do we say when it is suggested that “to take up our cross and follow Christ” means this sort of work?

Two things are said—one, that they are *visionary*, that people will not give or act on such a scale. Quite so; they will not—not yet. But we should if we were “fully Christians.” That is my point. We should then invest some of our capital as well as a margin of spare income in undertakings which, instead of giving the magic five per cent, would result in the elevation of a nation and a new impulse to Christianity over the world.

Or people say “It is *eleemosynary*. It would be degrading to the people who receive such gifts.” Yes; just as much so as are our universities and grammar-schools and churches and downs. We who live comfortably have the benefit of all these gifts of the past. I do not find them degrading, though I owe them an unspeakable debt. Why do not we provide similarly for the moral elevation of our poorer friends? It is because we are not yet “fully Christians.”

But there is a third reply, and a still worse one. It is that such proposals are *dangerous*. They would make the working classes above their work, and then "Good heavens! what would become of us?" The ignorance and the selfishness of such a reply makes any answer to it hopeless. We must wait till Christianity is a little more than skin deep. When it is so, we shall not fold our hands and complain of the inherent evils in our social condition, or try to revolutionise it by violence; but we shall set to work to purify it, and glorify it as it is, giving it new hope and joy and life and self-respect; taking the machinery of society as it is, recognising that men must work hard, and that intemperance, too early marriages, laziness, ignorance, want of skill, dulness, vice, and even bad manners will pull men down—recognising all this, and not making life easy, but harder to the idle and drunken, to such as need the discipline of finding life hard, but opening new possibilities of social happiness and security and amenities to working men and their families in our great cities, and we shall do this, knowing that reforms in society and law follow and do not precede reform in ourselves.

I intended to speak of our personal ideal as well as of our religious and social ideals. But time forbids. It cannot be compressed into a sentence, and you must now be weary. O Christian friends! let us not waste time in deploring the constitution of society, which is in the main right, or bemoaning the laws of political economy, which only tell us what will happen if we do not prevent it; but let us lay to heart that many of the evils we see are remediable if only we so-called Christian, religious

people were indeed followers of the Master, and all would be remediable if all men were so. The fault lies with us professing Christians, and it is only our own efforts and God's grace that can make us better. Let us show what Christianity really is, and then others, won by its beauty, will follow. Let us feel deeply how far we fall short of the Christian spirit, not with the sigh of resignation that we are indeed miserable sinners (tempered by the consoling thought that we are at least as good as our neighbours), but with the keen resolve to look into these great questions, and do something to make our lives and those of our children more worthy. For we may depend upon it that we who profess Christian principles shall be judged by Christian principles—nay, by Christ Himself—for *all* our conduct, as masters, as employers, as traders, as shareholders. We cannot get rid of one iota of our responsibility. Let us think of this, and then we may really profit by the lesson of Lent: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

XIX

THE INDWELLING GOD¹

“God is spirit.”—JOHN iv. 24. (*Revised Version*—margin.)

THE fundamental conception of religion is the thought of God ; all else is built upon it. We mean to-day by unbelief, not disbelief in this or that doctrine, nor in this or that view or expectation. Belief and disbelief turn to-day more plainly than ever on the one fundamental and awful thought of God. Once more, it is not the thought of the God of the Bible, whether the Jehovah of the Jews or the Father as revealed by Christ, but the thought of God as in any sense revealed or knowable—that is the central point on which philosophic unbelief fastens, and it is the penalty of educated minds to feel the full force of this doubt at certain stages of their growth. It is to you who do feel the pressure of this difficulty—and there are always such in every congregation—that I shall venture to speak ; and I will try and show you how, as we pass through these perilous seas of doubt, the mists have risen to some of us,

¹ Preached in Westminster Abbey on Sunday morning, 12th February 1888.

and the light shines clear again. God grant that my words may be helpful to some of you.

Under what image can we conceive of God? When the vastness of space was unknown, men could place Him above the clouds in realms to which they could assign a place in the heaven of heavens; but now, with the sidereal universe explored by telescopes, there is no place for God. Time was when men thought that the world was but a few thousand years old, and immediate creation presented no difficulty; but now age is unrolled behind age, just as space is behind space; the geological telescope is ever revealing æon behind æon, and there is no epoch of time for the work of that God whom we used to picture to ourselves as the Creator of the globe. The nature of force is better understood; the store of energy is neither added to nor diminished; it is only transmuted, and that by fixed laws. The process of what used to be called creation is better understood; the gradual development of form and intelligence going on through long ages is an infinitely larger as well as a truer view of creation; and so it seems as if there was no work for God in this world of Nature: no space, no time, no need, no possibility for the God of Nature of whom we used to dream! We still fall on our knees and pray to the "Almighty and Everlasting God who dost govern all things in heaven and earth," but when we pause and try to realise these solemn words one by one, and ask ourselves "What do we mean? What and where is this God? How does He govern all things in earth?" surely then we know what it is that makes men doubt. Be sure that we clergy have sympathy with these tremendous

doubts. Have not some of us ourselves passed through these deep waters? Have we not also felt the contradiction between the phrases of religion and the phrases of science? Do we not read what you read, think as you think, and feel as you feel?

You all know the ordinary language of apologists and defenders of the faith when they reach this point. They say, and say truly, that unbelief explains nothing and gets rid of no difficulties. They say, moreover, and say truly, that, after all, science tells nothing of the origin of things; there, at any rate, they say, is room for the unknown Prime Cause which we call God. It is true; but it is an answer which practically relegates God to a far remote and ever-receding past, and abandons all attempt to prove or feel His work in the present; it is the last answer of despair. Such a God is no support, no guide, not a Father at all. He brings no life to the soul and no light to nature. It is merely a name for the unknown origin of things. It is surely not in this direction that we must look for aids to our shrinking faith. This is but a thinly-veiled Agnosticism in the mouths of Christian apologists. A truer attitude in face of this tremendous contradiction is to proclaim the inadequacy of all human ways of conceiving and presenting the conception of God. In particular, every conception that requires space or time in which to picture God working in Nature errs by its anthropomorphism, and brings itself into conflict with science. It is an elementary truth, indeed, but I should not preach it did I not know how necessary it is to say it, and to say it in the plainest words.

Try and follow what I am going to say. There

are two conceptions of God, both fully sanctioned by the Bible and by our Lord Jesus Christ in particular. They may be briefly described as the conceptions of God as a Transcendent Person and as an Indwelling Spirit. By the conception of God as transcendent I mean, in the first place, God conceived as separated from us by space ; as having a physical essence, so to speak, and a place and points of action, as we thought of Him when we were children, and as the ancient religions pictured Him. Then, when that conception becomes impossible to us, we conceive Him as a Being who is at once power and righteousness ; who lives above and beyond all space and time. And then our thought passes still further into the abstract, and we think of Him as the Absolute or the Infinite. Underlying all the expressions and imagery of our prayers and our hymns lies this conception of the transcendent God ; it is the result of vast ages of human thought inherited, transmitted, and permanently embedded in language and in thought.

But experience shows that under all religions men reach a stage of thought and philosophy in which this conception of the transcendent God is submitted to the processes of reason. Some of us are in that stage, and we cannot escape its difficulties and its great responsibilities. As I described above, the conception undergoes successive changes ; it becomes more and more metaphysical ; it grows vaster and fainter ; and at last, under the steady gaze of reason, it vanishes. You look for it, but it is no longer there except as a memory. And so there comes a time in the life of many of us when faith conflicts with reason, when the world seems blank and the throne of God without an occupant.

I am, no doubt, describing very imperfectly, but I believe I am describing truly, a process through which many of ourselves have passed, or are passing, with more or less conscious self-observation ; and to many of you it may seem indistinguishable from unbelief. It is not so ; it is the birth, or it may be the birth, of a higher and deeper faith.

The conception of the Transcendent Deity grew remoter and fainter, I say, till it vanished in infinite distance and obscurity. There are curves known to mathematicians traced by a point moving continuously according to known laws, in which the point travels further and further away till it flies off to infinity and disappears. But there is continuity even there, and at the very instant of its disappearance it reappears in the very centre itself. So you will find it is with this conception of the God of faith, if it is presenting to you this intellectual difficulty ; it reappears in an unexpected quarter, and it strengthens and brightens as a faith in the indwelling God of whom our Lord speaks. Words we passed over before strike the heart with new meaning ; philosophy and science and piety conspire to consolidate this other and simpler conception of the Indwelling as opposed to the Transcendent God. I am describing to you what many have experienced as a help to others who, as yet, are scarcely able to define their thoughts and doubts on these profound matters. Have not some of us found that these doubts have not been disbelief, but the birth of a profounder and unassailable faith ?

The fountain-head of the Christian doctrine of the Indwelling God is, of course, the teaching of our Lord Himself, especially as reflected in the Gospel

of St. John. There is the fundamental conception of God—the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, the eternal Word dwelling in man. There we read: “I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” So we arrive at that great saying of my text: “God is spirit.” By this it is not meant that God is comparable to the semi-visualised conception of a phantasm, some unsubstantial but definite form. It means rather that the mind and intellect that works in us, the thoughts of holiness that arise in us, the aspirations we cherish, the love we feel, the law written in our hearts—all that makes the spirit and inspiration of man is to us more than the action, it is the revelation, of the Indwelling God. It is not possible to formulate this belief. God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. We see through a glass darkly, we do not yet see face to face. Earthly images and metaphors cannot rise above themselves. The Christian thought of God is far vaster than any phrases in which man may attempt to define it; our conceptions are limited by our conditions. But it may help some of the more thoughtful of you to be assured that faith in God is not bound up with the fitness of certain conceptions of God—nay, is compatible with their entire repudiation as inadequate and misleading; and when unbelief, and the restlessness it brings, arises from purely intellectual causes, this explanation of the wide range of Christian teaching about God is sometimes found to be a restoration of belief.

There are dangers in the exaggeration of this

conception as in that of the other. It may lead to a sort of Pantheism, such as is seen in the degraded forms of Buddhism ; which differ only by a shade from practical Atheism. It may lead also to the excesses of Mysticism. Powerful as Mysticism is with a few noble natures, it is not positive enough to hold the people. It obscures the notion of prayer, and it transforms the notion of sin. Sin becomes a struggle between the lower and the higher, and is the survival of the old nature and not obviously a breach of the divine law. But knowing this danger of exaggeration, and fully on our guard against its evils, we, nevertheless, do well to regard the great Christian revelation and its doctrines from this point of view, the earlier, the equally authoritative theory of the Indwelling God. Christ, the Son of God and Son of man, becomes, if I may venture so to say, intelligible ; the incarnation presents itself as the full tide of divine life flowing into the channels of human nature ; sin is the violation of the divine life imprinted on our hearts ; creation is the working of the divine forces according to law in the world itself ; prayer is the abandonment of self to God's will ; grace is the work of God indwelling in us ; the Holy Communion is for believers the recognition of the unity of mankind with Christ and with one another ; eternal life is continuous with the life of God in the soul that has already begun.

I cannot develop all these thoughts. Such a transference of the point of view from which theology is regarded is the work not of one sermon, but of many, or, rather, I should say, it is not the work of a man, but of an age. Nevertheless, the mere indication of the possibility of this transference, which,

though familiar to theologians, is perhaps not often spoken of in our sermons, may enable some among you who have felt the horror of the gradual vanishing of God in this world to see reappearing in their own inward consciousness, in their instinctive love of honour and purity and truth, in conscience, in the spirit and inspiration in their hearts, that same Indwelling God whom under another form they once loved and then lost, and to find, moreover, that this faith is scriptural, is Christian, and is capable of being fully correlated with those teachings which have been and must be ordinarily expressed in the terms of the other theology. The two views are not, of course, contradictory—both must be recognised as mere approximations from opposite quarters ; it is not that one is false and the other true—both must be partial and inadequate ; but some men are so constituted that while they cannot conceive of God as Transcendent, they can as Indwelling, and in this light the familiar and all-important Christian doctrines which had lost their hold on them once more are seen to be expressions of eternal truth.

Again, my friends, you will need no help from me to see how this thought of the Indwelling God will co-ordinate and put into their right relations the varied practical teaching you may get from the pulpit. All will be seen as an illustration of the central truth of the Indwelling Spirit. All calls to fresh devotion, and purity, and holiness are but invitations to make our bodies fit temples for God. All demands for more of brotherliness and charity and mutual service come with redoubled weight when we learn to look on our brother man as our brother in Christ and in God, animated by the same

Divine Spirit. It throws a light on all the mysteries of our consciousness, all our prayers and questionings, our gropings after truth, our aspirations and our fallings back, all the flutterings of the caged spirit. It is God that worketh in us. All our admiration for saints and heroes, all the grand possibility of human nature and its restlessness after the unattained, the revolutions and conflicts in human history, become intelligible. Let us not attenuate the tremendous significance of the words. And in individuals, too, these struggles, this persistence after failure, this gradual loosening of our hold on earth to trust ourselves to the arms of our Father in Heaven, these are but the workings in us of the Spirit which God has given us.

I must add one final word. No removal of intellectual difficulties arising from the inadequacy of human expression will avail to restore and strengthen faith in God unless you are deeply in earnest to remove also all moral obstacles. It is our duty, as ministers of Christ, to speak plainly on this point. You cannot have living faith in God, under whatever form you conceive Him, unless you prepare your heart to be a temple fit for Him to dwell in. Do not imagine that any explanation can bring down the intellectual conception of God to the grasp of one who is spiritually alienating himself from God. Intellectual obstacles may be diminished, but it is with the heart and spirit that man believes. There must be the constant struggle against sins of the flesh ; against pride and unkindness and sloth ; against moral indifference and religious sectarianism ; there must be sympathy and the willing mutual service of one another ; there must be prayer and

the willingness to use all means of grace ; there must be the opening of the heart in utter self-abandonment to be the abode of God. If the faith of any of you has been shaken, and even dissipated, by the intellectual difficulties inherent in the transcendent conception of God, then I pray you most earnestly first to be stricter than ever in your life, in your rigid adherence to purity and honour and kindness, and next to study those records of Christ as a man, that glorious ideal of humanity, that incarnation of the Spirit of God in all its fulness. And it is through Him and His words that having learnt the truth of the Indwelling God, we go on to learn that God is Transcendent also, apart from man, a Being whom we can worship, a Father of mercies, whom we know and love in His Son. He is the Revelation of God, and not only of one conception of God. Thus it will come to pass that your faith in God will be restored and strengthened, and you will see that your old belief was right and true, though its words were metaphorical and its form unscientific ; you will come back to it with new love and faith, and you will once more find joy and peace in believing.

XX

THE TRINITY¹

“Hold fast the form of sound words.”—2 TIM. i. 13.

TRINITY SUNDAY is the day on which we are invited to meditate on the threefold revelation of God—in nature, in Jesus Christ, and in conscience ; or, as it is expressed in the Apostles’ Creed, that form of sound words which has come down to us, the revelation of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This day, therefore, differs from all other anniversaries in our calendar. Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day, Whit-Sunday, are anniversaries of historical events. Trinity Sunday is the commemoration of a doctrine. Half the year, from Advent to Whit-Sunday, is set apart for the study of the life of our Lord, and of the historical origins of the Church of Christ. Half the year, from the first Sunday after Trinity to the last, is set apart for the study of Christian life and practice. Trinity Sunday is the link between the two. It sums up all that goes before of doctrine ; it looks forward to all that follows of duty.

¹ Oxford, 27th May 1888.

It is unique also in another respect. The particular expression of the doctrine of the Trinity, which the Church has adopted, is not primitive. It does not belong to the Apostolic or the sub-Apostolic age. No one could find the Nicene, still less the Athanasian, Creed in the New Testament, or in the earliest Christian writings. Hence the recurrence of this day is a perpetual reminder to us of the growth and development of Christian doctrine. The Creeds we use are, indeed, themselves a witness of the development of primitive Christianity into theology, and of theology into metaphysics; but Trinity Sunday is pre-eminently a witness to us that revelation is not stationary, not dead, a thing of the past, but progressive, alive, a thing of the present, that the Holy Spirit is still leading men into truth according to Christ's promise. It suggests to us that the theological student must study the nineteenth century as well as the first four and the sixteenth, and must look in it also for God's message of revelation to the world.

Few, perhaps, would be found to deny this, and yet it does not often meet a cordial and fearless recognition among Churchmen. Few would assert that the revelation of divine truth, at sundry times and in divers manners, ceased at Jerusalem in the first, or at Nicæa in the fourth, or in the Church of England in the sixteenth century; but it is difficult to realise as joyfully and hopefully as we ought that God's revelation is continuous and unceasing; and that our own age is witnessing a marvellous revelation to the human reason as to the work of God and the nature of man.

So great a revelation it has been, that our thoughts have not yet had time to adjust themselves to the

new light. We have been perplexed with seeming incompatibilities of the old and new phraseologies, baffled in tracing a continuity ; more ready to see, perhaps more anxious to see, contradiction than growth. But all this, we may be sure, is but a passing phase, and we are perhaps now beginning to see that all revelation and knowledge comes, as Christ Himself came, as part of a continuous process, not to destroy but to fulfil—to build up the great edifice of man's knowledge of himself, and his Creator, and his destiny.

The point seems to me of high importance to us all. If we realise that revelation on these profound subjects is progressive, we shall in the first place heartily and genuinely welcome the chief cause of change, and that is the keen scientific and historical spirit that has taken firm root among us. It is learning that advances knowledge and discovery, and discovery is at least one of the ways in which fresh truth is revealed to man. And, in the next place, we shall feel so certain that the theology that is to be will be something better, fuller, truer than what has been, though we may not see it ourselves, that if for a generation or two the effect of new knowledge makes the thought of God seem meaner and poorer, we shall know that this effect will not last. Theology will always absorb knowledge, and not be killed by it.

But it seems to be an invariable rule, that the wrong inference from new knowledge is drawn at first ; and that truth is only won by the slow exhaustion of errors. Geocentric theories precede heliocentric ; phlogiston precedes oxygen : emission theories precede undulatory ; and as in science so,

perhaps, in theology. We may, therefore, take courage. If the new outburst of knowledge has for the present created a distrust of theology, if, for any one here, it has lowered the conception of God, and dissolved into mists and mythology the thought of the Trinity, I bid him be sure that this is but a temporary result. Let him lift up his eyes even now, and he will see the promise of coming light.

Can I venture, in speaking before such an audience, to touch on so vast a theme as the way in which scientific thought is affecting the Christian interpretation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity? I can but humbly offer a few reflections, but they are full of hope, and it is for you to make your own whatever in them is opportune and true, and find in them, I trust, a fresh impulse to duty.

Our whole attitude towards theology has been profoundly altered by the conviction that we have attained, though perhaps scarcely formulated, of the unity of nature. It is seen in many ways. The remotest ages of the past are now linked with ours in one continuous physical and biological history, and the most distant stars reveal a kinship to our own sun and earth. Our theology has therefore of necessity to be not a theology of this planet alone, or of this age alone, but a theology of the universe and of all time. The earth cannot be for us any longer the one stage on which the divine drama is played. It is this thought more than anything else which has unconsciously, but irresistibly, antiquated for us so much of theological speculation.

The most marked and direct effect on theology of this conception of the unity of nature has, of course, come from the alteration it has made in the

position of man. Man was formerly regarded as unique, as separate from nature. The earth was a platform on which Adam and his posterity were working out their eternal destiny in the sight of all creation. But man is now seen to be a part of nature instead of separate from it. The unity of nature has embraced even ourselves. And the effect of this tremendous reversal of ideas must be felt in our theology.

One effect has been already strongly felt. But, as I said before, the first effect is not likely to be the permanent one.

The first effect, of which we are all conscious, has unquestionably been to degrade man to a humbler position in his own eyes. It has been to materialise man's spirit, to destroy the supernatural, to lower our conception of man's origin, his status, his surroundings, and his destiny. There have been murmurs against this result, but the apparent logic and the confident voice of science has silenced the murmurs ; and we prepare to face the fact, if fact it is. But the gloom paralyses action, and checks aspiration. Poets and prophets are silent.

But now an after-thought is dawning on us. There is a gleam of light in the gloom. These great revolutions of human thought work in long cycles. The revival of learning does not in one generation make a reformation ; the age of science does not in one generation transform a theology. It will not be surprising then if our sons shall view the great reversal that I spoke of very differently from ourselves ; and if they shall say that the result is not, as we thought, to materialise man, but to spiritualise and glorify nature ; not to degrade mind to mechanism, but to

see in mechanism the operation of mind ; not to say, "I see no God ; only the brute forces of nature acting by mindless law ;" but to see the forces of nature, mechanical, vital, spiritual, as one continuous operation of a universal mind, a divine sense of which we are conscious in ourselves. Who can as yet even outline the effect of such a thought as this on philosophy and science and poetry : "I believe in God the Father Almighty." With what new fulness of meaning may we not hope that these words will one day be said by all the world.

But we must remember that though this revelation through reason as to the continuity of man with nature, and the spiritualisation of nature, the tracing mind and God in all natural law may satisfy the feeling of a poet and the reason of the philosopher, and is indeed essential for the coherence and integrity of his thought, yet it is too abstract a thought for our daily life. Man's soul is still athirst for God, yea, even for the living God, and any attempt to substitute a philosophical conception of God for the Father whom we have learnt through Christ to know is sure to end in a recoil towards superstition. Men are no more fit to receive such abstractions as a practical guide to life than are sailors to find their longitude by the lunar theory.

It satisfies our intellectual needs, on a day like this, to trace the identity of the God whom reason is revealing more and more clearly in nature and law, with the Father whom Christ has taught us to worship ; but for our daily needs, for support under flagging energies, and in face of the slow progress we make, for light and for hope, we need the nearer presence of a Father. And Him we can scarcely see in this

age of the world, except with the eyes of Jesus Christ. The religious consciousness of Christ, His thought of God, fulfilling the thought of prophet and Psalmist, this is the great revelation to the world. Christ is the practical demonstration that man can fully realise the presence of the Father. Christ's manhood that links Him to ourselves, and His perfect oneness of nature with God, revealed in His words and life, this is the chain that reaches from nature to God, the spiritual continuity which our nature requires. Thus the theism of science is seen to lead to Christianity as an inevitable consequence. To say in full consciousness of its meaning, "I believe in God the Father," is to lead up to what follows, "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord."

We have seen that the first result of the identification of man with nature was to materialise man ; it has been an afterthought to see that it really spiritualises nature. In the same way the first effect of the same identification has been to make Christ more human, and the later effect will surely be to make Him more truly and more intelligibly divine. In Him we see an entire oneness with the spiritual power of the universe which pervades and controls it. We look at Jesus Christ, and we see the only embodiment that God has given us of the Divine Spirit ; we see as much of the infinite as the finite can see.

Our age is suffering from a sort of dilettantism in its thought of Christ. It wishes to understand without believing, and to profit by enthusiasm without illusions ; it wishes, as Amiel said, to combine free-thinking with the delicate epicureanism of religious emotion. But the revelation of Jesus Christ is not to be apprehended by literary exquisites ; who would

retain the sensibilities, but discharge none of the duties that spring from the faith. And I think the cure for this dilettantism is to be found in the thought that is now formulating itself in the minds of many, that the religion which Jesus Christ professed and taught must be disentangled from the aftergrowth of a religion which has made Jesus Christ its object. We are learning the religion of Christ—to see the Father with His eyes ; Christianity is beginning to be seen as primarily the acceptance of the religion which Jesus Christ expressed and exhibited in His life and words.

The central doctrine about Christ, which is the truth that this day commemorates, is that in Him is perfectly realised, and partially revealed, the presence of the Divine element which exists in ourselves and in all humanity, and, in its degree, in all nature. Christ is seen as the head of all creation. The effect of Christ's teaching and revelation is thus to place the world in the same direct communion with the Father that He Himself enjoyed, and thus to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world ; and if we make God the object of our faith and allegiance, as Christ made Him, and if we make Christ's life and love our pattern, and the inspiring force of our lives, then are we truly believers in Jesus Christ. This is not dilettantism, for such a recognition of leadership and of an ideal involves ceaseless effort. He is not the worse Christian who uncritically accepts the mythology and metaphysics, the unhistorical history, and the unworthy superstitions which have been in the past, and still are in some minds, and long will be, associated with the Christian faith ; but neither is he the better. They lie apart, outside the essence of

faith in Christ. The power of faith in the true historic Christ is beginning to be seen, and I for one cannot doubt that the disillusioning that has been going on, the clearing Christianity from some of the ruins and the rubbish that have buried it, will give an intensity and reality and eagerness to man's following of Christ, and worship of Him, that the world has not known for many an age. We are beginning to say, our poets and prophets are beginning to say, in the simplicity of daily intercourse men are beginning to say,—I wish to make my religion that which seems to me to have been the religion of Christ. I wish to pray to my Father as He prayed, to work as He did for the coming of our Father's kingdom on earth, and to live the life He lived, of simplicity and mutual service and love and purity, as the way to bring in the kingdom of God. All else I will count secondary, and useful only, as it helps forward this one aim of living in the presence and service of God, as my Master lived.

Surely here is hope. What freedom to our fettered thoughts; what freedom for varied action, what reality to our image of Christ, what new life to the teaching of this day. How will it restore the use of reason, God's vehicle of revelation to mankind, what opening for unity in religious life, impossible now when men separate themselves according to unverifiable development of dogmas, or unessential points of Church organisation! What hopes of recalling into the ranks of faithful and honoured Christians those two classes, so profoundly influential, the classes of scholars and artisans, who now drift away into indifference, alienated rather by the theory than the practice of Christianity. No Church can

be strong without these classes, and here in this worship of the Father in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and in the worship of Christ as visibly manifesting to us His oneness with the Father, and revealing Him to our eyes, in accepting the excellency of that ideal life, and making it their own ideal—here is to be found what may yet unite all men.

This is the splendid hope that this age of learning is opening before your eyes. This is the Promised Land that the young may enter.

Many of you will be professedly teachers ; some will be clergy : all will be in your various ways, indeed you already are, centres of religious influence on all who surround you. Will you not try to keep this larger Christianity—this religion of Christ Himself—ever before you as the plan and scheme of your life ? Do not treat with irreverent or unsympathetic hand those systems and those phrases in which the religion of Christ has been transmitted through the ages. Do not separate yourselves from your brethren, who may find for themselves and others a needful support in what may seem to you inadequate or even false. But do not on the other hand feel bound to distort the truth which God teaches you, or think that the dim light of antiquity is of necessity holier than God's sunshine of to-day. And believe me that you may find in the study of Christ the realisation of our own ideal relation with God the Father, and by trying to live as He did in that sacred and universal Presence, you may find a new power in Christianity as the one certain link to God that you need for yourself, for your own spiritual needs, and the one certain regenerating influence on the world ; and thus with a new depth and fervour you

may say, "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord."

I cannot, and I need not, point out at equal length how the same thought of unity and continuity in nature helps us to give intenseness and reality to the belief in the Holy Spirit of God. That same Divine Spirit which is the Creator and Mind of the universe, and by which we are linked in indefinable sympathy with one another and with all nature; that Spirit which is perfectly and for ever revealed in human form in the person of Jesus Christ, is in its measure revealed in each of us, in our aspirations, our love, our intellect, our conscience. The God whom we see everywhere, and in Christ, is also seen within. The universe is His temple, Christ is His manifestation; but He is also the Indwelling God.

So surely as science is pointing to a large and inspiring theism, and as this theism leads of necessity to a Christianity, simple and great as was Christ himself; so in that Christianity will be truly felt the power and personal sway of the Holy Spirit of God, as its abiding verification, and constant motive. It rests on the rock of personal experience.

Here is indeed a theme worthy of the poet or the prophet. Here too is an inspiration to a more ideal life, springing out of this age of science and calm investigation, and it is you who are young who are the inheritors of this inspiration, and destined to be the workers of the new Reformation, in the saner and still more vigorous Christianity that is to be; inheritors of the only trustworthy inspiration to holiness and philanthropy, and mutual service—that

which comes from faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Such seems to me to be the lesson of Trinity Sunday, and with such thoughts and such hopes let us once more repeat the ancient formula, and hold fast the form of sound words, the earliest Creed, old but ever new—I believe in God the Father, in His Son Christ, and in the Holy Spirit ; Amen.

[NOTE.—Some paragraphs in this Sermon, notably on pp. 259, 260, are adapted from a MS. extract I made from some source which I am unable to trace. I believe it to be Martineau.]

APPENDIX

TO WHAT EXTENT THE RESULTS OF HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM, ESPECIALLY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, SHOULD BE RECOGNISED IN SERMONS AND TEACHING.¹

I WILL waste no time in dwelling on the difference between preaching and teaching, and between one congregation and class and another. I assume that we must teach "as people are able to bear it." Nor will I do more than briefly point out the inevitableness, the importance, and the difficulty of the subject proposed; difficult, chiefly, because it is so hard to see whither we shall be led if we follow what seems to be truth and reason. I will pass on at once to what seem to me the main principles which must guide each man in his own use of these results of criticism, with only one word of personal preface. It is to explain that I have no right to speak as those who will follow me, as an authority in Biblical research. I have been asked to speak as one whose teaching, whether in pulpit or class-room, has immediately to be tested by contact with the critical spirit of our universities, and who has tried so to teach that there shall be at no time a painful shock to the faith of his young hearers.

Some may think that the question may be expressed in simpler language. How far ought the clergy to tell the truth about the Bible?

Let us first lay down our principles in answering the question in this shape.

¹ A Paper read at the Manchester Church Congress, October 1888.

Firstly, *We must tell the truth.* Nothing could justify the clergy in maintaining a view of the Bible which they believe or suspect to be false. It would demoralise the clergy. It would lower their whole standard of truth. Their voices will not ring true when they preach what they do believe, if they also preach what they do not believe. The pulpit must not deceive the pew, even for what it thinks is the good of the pew. The suspicion of dishonesty destroys its influence with the pew, but, what is far more important, the fact of dishonesty corrupts and degrades the pulpit itself. *We must tell the truth, and nothing but the truth.*

But, secondly, *We must tell the whole truth*; and here, it seems to me, lies the difficulty of the position, which the critics of us clergy are slow to appreciate. The question is as to the *results* of criticism. But there is an ambiguity lying in this word "results." I do not mean that there are no results of criticism so certain that no one of credit will dispute them. It is tolerably agreed that the Bible is not a scientific text-book. But I heard one eminent preacher not long ago maintain in public that all the main results of science are anticipated, in a sort of cryptogram, in the Bible; and he himself, among several striking illustrations, found what he described as "Harvey's immortal discovery of the circulation of the blood" in St. Paul's Epistles.

Nor do I mean that Old Testament critics do not agree among themselves even in important points. This is true and inevitable in the present condition of knowledge. But it must nevertheless be admitted by candid men, if they are students at all, that there are some positive results of the highest importance; and it may be well to state some of them here explicitly. For example, it must be regarded as a result of criticism that the historical books of the Old Testament are highly composite in their nature; that, while they contain fragments of ancient documents, they have been edited and re-edited at later dates; and that some important sections are thus popularly referred to periods to which they do not belong. Portions, moreover, of the narrative, quite irrespectively of all questions about the miraculous element, have come to be regarded as *legendary*

and unhistorical; and the text is found to be by no means perfect. It is a positive result of literary criticism and of modern science to make it clear that no science is taught or implied, and that the scientific standpoint of the writers was simply that of the period in which they wrote. It is a still more important result that the morality inculcated, indeed revelation itself, must be regarded as progressive and historical; stages of gradual enlightenment succeeding one another.

We sometimes forget that the Old Testament includes all that survives of Hebrew literature of all kinds, and there is nothing which *a priori* exempts this literature from the application of the ordinary principles and methods of literary, textual, and historical criticism. The methods which detected the composite origin of the *Iliad* are applicable to the Pentateuch; those which dissolved Livy's history of the kings of Rome are applicable to the early history of the Jews; and the principles of textual criticism, which are giving us better texts of Sophocles and of the New Testament, have revealed the defects of the Hebrew text, and may one day, so the Old Testament revisers lead us to hope, actually reconstruct it. These are solid results, whatever their importance may be. When I speak of the ambiguity lying in the word results, I by no means intend to urge the lazy commonplace that "critics are not agreed among themselves, and that when they are so it will be time enough to listen to them."

The ambiguity lies here. These results are to a considerable extent not adapted for use in preaching and teaching until we have absorbed them, and fitted them in along with other facts in our general scheme of the nature of revelation and of the Bible. As they stand, the results of criticism are more or less in the position of scientific theorems, the applications and connections of which have not yet been discovered; unfit for religious teaching, and having no reference to it, but to be kept in mind, and *not contradicted*, even by implication. We do not preach physical science, but some knowledge of physical science would be occasionally useful to prevent absurdities, and in the same way a knowledge of the results of criticism

imposes a limit on our expressions which must not be transgressed.

But again, this negative use of the results of criticism is not all. The results of criticism are gradually forming a mass of orderly knowledge, a science in fact, lying ready to be used when we preachers can see how it all bears on the other undeniable qualities of the Bible, and use it for edification and religion. But the process of so absorbing and digesting these results into a really higher criticism of the Bible is a slow one, and has scarcely begun. The criticism of a great poet or philosopher would be a poor thing if it went no further than such points as I have referred to. What is his insight into the eternal problems of the soul? How does he assist us in understanding human life and destiny and in knowing God? Is he a true seer? And if we ask this of our higher critics of Sophocles, or Plato, or Wordsworth, we shall not think that the results of the so-called higher criticism of the Old Testament, however useful as materials, are final and complete results.

To put it otherwise, there is a division of labour. The critics, like other men of science, have arrived, and are arriving, at certain results; these are immediately useful in preventing serious misuse of the Bible in the pulpit, such as sometimes shocks the pew; and may be useful in enriching and expanding our whole conception of the Bible, when we have sufficiently mastered them and traced them to *their* results. The results as they stand are *intermediate*, not final, in Biblical criticism.

These seem to be the principles on which to answer the immediate and practical question. Tell nothing but the truth about the Bible, and take pains to inform yourself about the truths of criticism, but do not hastily impart such intermediate results as I have spoken of either to people totally unprepared for them, or to any one until you have well assimilated them, until they fill the Bible with new life and power and meaning, until in fact the limitation "how far" becomes quite unnecessary, because you are then able to tell the whole truth.

Now if the question proposed were really identical with

the one I substituted for it, this would be all that it would be necessary to say. But something more is implied and involved in the question, What is to be the nature of the final authority in religious teaching? Does criticism destroy or weaken the authority of the Bible and its inspiration? These, and such as these, are the underlying questions which give this subject its great importance, and justify the position assigned to it at this congress. It is only the second of these questions we are here concerned with.

The religion of a people must rest on some authority. In theory Protestantism takes not authority but reason for her watchword; but in fact it has substituted one authority for another. A few favoured individuals may live by an individual religion of reason. But the myriads of our towns, and the hundreds of our villages, cannot so live. Men soon weary of the effort involved in a religion without authority. And what authorities are there in our religion? Speaking generally, I suppose we should reply, the Church and the Bible. And hence if the result of criticism is to weaken or undermine the authority of the Bible, we may naturally infer that it will either weaken the total sanction of religion, or exalt the authority of the Church, or both; in other words, that it must lead to Scepticism or Catholicism. I do not agree to this conclusion, as we shall see.

But let us first examine whether criticism weakens the authority of the Bible and its inspiration.

We must grant that it alters the nature of that authority. It has become impossible for one who has entered into the spirit of criticism to regard the Bible as verbally inspired, or inspired in such a way as to leave no room for a human element; its statements are not, as far as we can prove, protected from historic or scientific, from critical or speculative error; it betrays both human fallibility and human bias; its morality is that of the noblest spirits of its time. Its commands are relative, its revelation is progressive. We almost unconsciously, but quite inevitably, sit in judgment on it, and form our own conclusions as to what is legend and what is history in its narratives, and what is temporary and what is eternal in its moral teachings. It

is no longer a mere quarry for texts to establish a quasi-scientific dogmatic system ; we *cannot* use it as the authors of the Confessions and Articles and *loci communes* of the Reformation period used it. We demand what few of the Reformers dreamt of demanding—a ground and reason for the authority of these texts. In fact, we interpret the Bible historically. Its authority, and our view of its inspiration, are not the same as they were.

And yet I do not believe that when we have mastered the results of critical science we shall find that they weaken either the power of the Bible or the total authority of religion. Why should the disintegration of some books affect their intrinsic value? Why is the inspiration of the Evangelical Prophet the less if we do not identify him with Isaiah? Are there no treasures in earthen vessels?

Something, and indeed much to our own generation, depends on the promptitude and completeness with which we welcome and occupy these new regions of human learning. When the Antipodes were first spoken of they were denounced by the Popes, and it was declared to be a shame in a Christian man even to mention them. Now we colonise them, and they even contribute to our national defence. Let us do the same, somewhat less tardily, with these new regions of learning. Every one knows Agassiz's saying that every new scientific truth passes through three stages in its reception. First, people say it is false ; then, that it is contrary to religion ; and lastly, that everybody knew it before. Let us skip the second stage at all events. No scientific result can be contrary to religion. The mere apprehension that this could be so is itself a deep infidelity. Let the clergy make this science their own, and find in it a new power for the Bible, and a new authority, and a new inspiration, which shall more than replace the old.

The nature of this increased power which the Bible will gain from the results of Biblical criticism appears to me to be as follows :—

First, in the simplicity and veracity of the historical interpretation. Instead of the Old Testament being a sort of museum of oracles, embarrassing in its details here, and omissions there, and unaccountable in its form as a Divine

revelation, we are able to interpret it as it is—the fragments of the history and literature of the most interesting of nations. We may admit most frankly the human origin of this literature, and, feeling more strongly than ever its Divine inspiration, yet see in it the record of men's search after God, and cry to Him; and we may feel more than ever that this record is also God's voice to us, for by it He has educated our fathers and ourselves. We can study nothing now apart from its origins, and here are preserved to us the origins of our religious thought; and the more we realise that all human history and discovery and thought are themselves a revelation of God, the higher value shall we put on the history of the religious development of this nation of Israel which has so profoundly affected the world, and has indicated its supremacy over all other religious developments. Such a view of the Old Testament may make our preaching far more prophet-like, and make us dwell more on God's teaching in history that righteousness and holiness alone exalt a nation, and make its citizens worthy. Further, it is obvious that the vulgar and coarse ridicule and misrepresentations of the Bible by a low class of Secularists arise mainly from ignorance, and appeal only to ignorance. How much harm these publications do it is difficult to estimate. But they can be rendered harmless, if not extinguished, by spreading a fuller knowledge of the nature of the Bible, and by showing in what sense it is the Word of God.

But, secondly, the results of criticism compel us to look for the real inspiration of the Bible which survives, and indeed is only fully felt, when one has got rid of false theories of inspiration. I do not now speak of the New Testament, but whence comes the charm of the stories of the patriarchs? What is the magic of the Psalms and the prophets which makes them appeal to us as no other book appeals? They possess the mystery of spiritual insight and sympathy. They are the works of spiritual giants who have lived closer to God than the men of other nations were able to do. They inspire with piety and trust in God. They lead to holiness. They form the channels of our own devotion. They give a glimpse into the eternal world

of the τὰ ὄντα which perchance a few philosophers may win otherwise, but which all the world needs, and which all the world can find in these pages. They are a revelation of God ; a source of purity and nobility of life. Science and criticism will not explain the Bible any more than chemistry and mechanics will explain a man. "The explanation of that which is explicable does but bring out into greater clearness the inexplicableness of that which lies beyond." Just now we are in the age of science and criticism. They form the dominant idea. But they do but form part of the προπαιδεία of the world, and not its higher education. They do not define the future progress of the world. They do not replace or exclude the study of ethics and philosophy and religion. We must not let them frighten us out of our lawful territory. The majesty of the Bible stands unimpaired, and criticism may make it all the more conspicuous and unique.

But, thirdly, when every part of the Bible was equally authoritative, it was impossible to assign due importance to the life and words of Christ. The result of criticism is to introduce a perspective ; and I think we may distinctly notice already among those who most fully accept the results of criticism, the increasing prominence given to the words and teaching and ideal of Christ. Surely this is a result intensely to be desired ; and if criticism brings to view, as surely it does bring to view, the historic personality of Jesus Christ, and give us a more true and vivid presentation of His character, His teaching, His life, His Revelation of the Father ; make Him stand out, more than ever, before and above all His biographers and exponents, above His Church, and above His Word, then I say we may welcome the results of criticism.

THE END

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